

"In the latter days, the sun shall rise from the west" • Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be on him)

Islam & our Environment



"Your action matters, no matter how small. Think before you act"

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Humanity's
Amaanat:
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The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a religious organization, international in its scope, with branches in 189 countries in Africa, North America, South America, Asia, Australasia, and Europe. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established in 1889 by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} (1835-1908) in Qadian, a small and remote village in the Punjabi province of India. He claimed to be the expected reformer of the latter days, the Awaited One of the world community of religions (The Mahdi and Messiah). The Movement he started is an embodiment of the benevolent message of Islam – peace, universal brotherhood, and submission to the Will of God – in its pristine purity. Hadhrat Ahmad^{as} proclaimed Islam as the religion of man: “The religion of the people of the right path” (98:6). The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was created under divine guidance with the objective to rejuvenate Islamic moral and spiritual values. It encourages interfaith dialogue, diligently defends Islam and tries to correct misunderstandings about Islam in the West. It advocates peace, tolerance, love and understanding among followers of different faiths. It firmly believes in and acts upon the Qur’anic teaching: “There is no compulsion in religion” (2:257). It strongly rejects violence and terrorism in any form and for any reason.

After the passing of its founder, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has been headed by his elected successors. The present Head of the Community, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, was elected in 2003. His official title is Khalifatul Masih V or Fifth Successor of the Promised Messiah.



Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908)

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Muslims follow the name of God's prophets with the prayer *alaehis salaam* or 'may peace be upon him,' and for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu alaeihi wasallam* or 'may peace and blessings of God be upon him.' Companions of prophets and righteous personalities who have passed away are saluted by *radhi-Allaho anhu/a* or 'may Allah be pleased with him/her.' While such salutations sometimes are not set out in the text for readability, we encourage readers to offer these prayers as if set out in full.

Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq (1872-1957) was the first Ahmadiyya Muslim missionary to arrive in America. In 1921, he founded the *Muslim Sunrise*, which stands today as the longest running Muslim publication in America. The magazine seeks to open discussions on Islam and topics relating to religion in general. It highlights the role of Islam in an ever changing global society. It provides a platform for public opinion on contemporary issues and presenting their solutions from an Islamic perspective.

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AHMADIYYA
MUSLIM COMMUNITY

United States of America

*Muslims who believe in the Messiah, Hazrat
Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Qadiani^{AS}*



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

From the Holy Qur'an

Al Hajj (22:19)

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَسْجُدُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ وَالنُّجُومُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَالشَّجَرُ وَالدَّوَابُّ وَأَبْ
وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنَ النَّاسِ ۚ وَكَثِيرٌ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِ الْعَذَابُ ۚ وَمَنْ يُهِنِ
اللَّهُ فَبَالَهُ مِنْ مُّكْرِمٍ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَاءُ ^{السجدة}

Hast thou not seen that to Allah submits whosoever is in the heavens and whosoever is in the earth, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and the mountains, and the trees, and the beasts, and many of mankind? But there are many who become deserving of punishment. And whomsoever Allah disgraces, none can raise him to honour. Verily, Allah does what He pleases.

In the Words of the Promised Messiah

Man is a social animal and none of his affairs can be carried to completion without cooperation. For instance, take bread which is the staff of life. How much social cooperation is needed for its production? From the stage of cultivation of the earth to the stage when a loaf of bread becomes available for eating, scores of workers have to cooperate with each other. This shows how much cooperation and mutual help is needed in different sectors of social affairs. To fill this need the All-Wise One created man equipped with different degrees of faculties and capacities so that everyone should occupy himself pleasurably according to his capacity and inclination; some should engage in cultivation, some should manufacture agricultural implements, some should grind corn, some should bring water, some should bake bread, some should spin, some should weave, some should engage in trade, some should carry on commerce, some should undertake employment and thus everyone should cooperate and help each other. Cooperation involves dealing with each other and these dealings give rise to questions of treatment, compensation, and neglect of duty which demand a



Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908)

system of law should restrain wrong, trespass, rancour, disorder, and neglect of God, so that the order of the universe should not be upset.

The making of a living and the due performance of social duties depend upon justice and the recognition of God and these demand a system of law which should provide for due administration of justice and proper understanding of the Divine and which should exclude every type of wrong and every kind of mistake. Such a system of law can be promulgated only by the Being Who is altogether free from forgetfulness, mistake, wrong and trespass and Who is worthy of obedience and respect in His Being. The law may be good, but if the promulgator of the law is not such who by his rank should possess su-

periority over all and the right to rule over them and he is in the eyes of the people not free from tyranny, vice, error, and mistake, the law will either not come into operation or if it does come into operation, would give rise to every kind of disorder and instead of doing any good it would result in harm. All this would predicate a Divine Book, for all good qualities and every kind of excellence is to be found only in the Book of God.

Secondly, the wisdom underlying a difference of ranks is, that the excellence of good people may be demonstrated, for every good quality is known only by contrast. As it is said:

“Verily, We have made all that is on the earth as an ornament for it, that We may try them as to which of them is best in conduct.” (Holy Quran 18:8)

That is to say: God has made everything upon earth a source of ornament for it so that the righteousness of the righteous may be demonstrated in comparison with the wicked, and so that which is fine may become apparent. Opposites are known by comparison with opposites and the value of the good is known by comparison with the bad.”

(Brahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 1 pp. 203-207, footnote 11)

Editorial

Environmental issues are a growing concern throughout the world. Climate changes across the globe have attracted the attention of scientists and academia. In the political arena, policy decisions are surrounded by each country's contribution to the problem and the fears their people perceive. However, industrial countries are stalling in addressing the situation with immediate action for fear of inhibiting their industrial growth. They presently oppose the immediate actions suggested by concerned scientists.

Most environmental discussions take place in the political and scientific circles. However, there is another arena where this discussion needs to take place—the moral arena involving the role of religions. People respond to religious values and it is another avenue by which the solutions for problems such as global warming can be addressed.

Islam has provided guidance in the area of environmental issues as well. The Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{SAW} have provided clear direction on how to safeguard our

surroundings and our planet. They also provide us guidance on how to co-exist with other species we share our world with. How we share the limited resources of the planet with others and how we protect the natural wealth provided by God from depletion is a matter of our survival.

Over billions of years, God has given us the means of our sustenance including the earth, the atmosphere, animals, the mountains, forests and water sources. Human beings have been entrusted with the moral responsibility of taking care of all these breathtaking treasures. We can subdue and rule over the animal species as well as other life forms such as trees. We can destroy them or take care of them in a manner that would assure the survival of billions of living beings on our planet.

Industrial growth took place over the last 200 years with such velocity that we did not worry about the implications on the environment. Even when we started to discover what the adverse effects would be, we ignored them and chose to be materialistic. Knowing full well the effects on the Ozone layer and the warming climate changes did not divert us from producing more carbon dioxide and contributing to the environmental

problems. Now, this phenomenon is spread to the non-western industrial countries such as China and India.

It is essential that the religious leaders also discuss this important subject in bringing attention to their congregations about their responsibilities that God has bestowed upon them. Concepts of sharing, simplicity of life and fighting materialistic attitudes are common among all religions. Religious leaders need to dwell on these subjects. It is our responsibility to show our thanks to the Benevolent God for providing us a perfect planet for our needs. Everything is designed to be recycled in nature around us. We must appreciate what we have and show by our actions that we would cherish it to continue to benefit from it. It would be pleasing to God.

In this issue we have presented different aspects of the environmental issues from the perspective of Islamic principles and teachings. Hopefully, it would arouse debates in the religious circles to promote the importance of our responsibility for the planet we live on. May Allah give us the wisdom and show us the ways we can rise above the political, economical and materialistic platforms and take care of the beautiful planet God entrusted us with.

We have a “Hidden Friend”

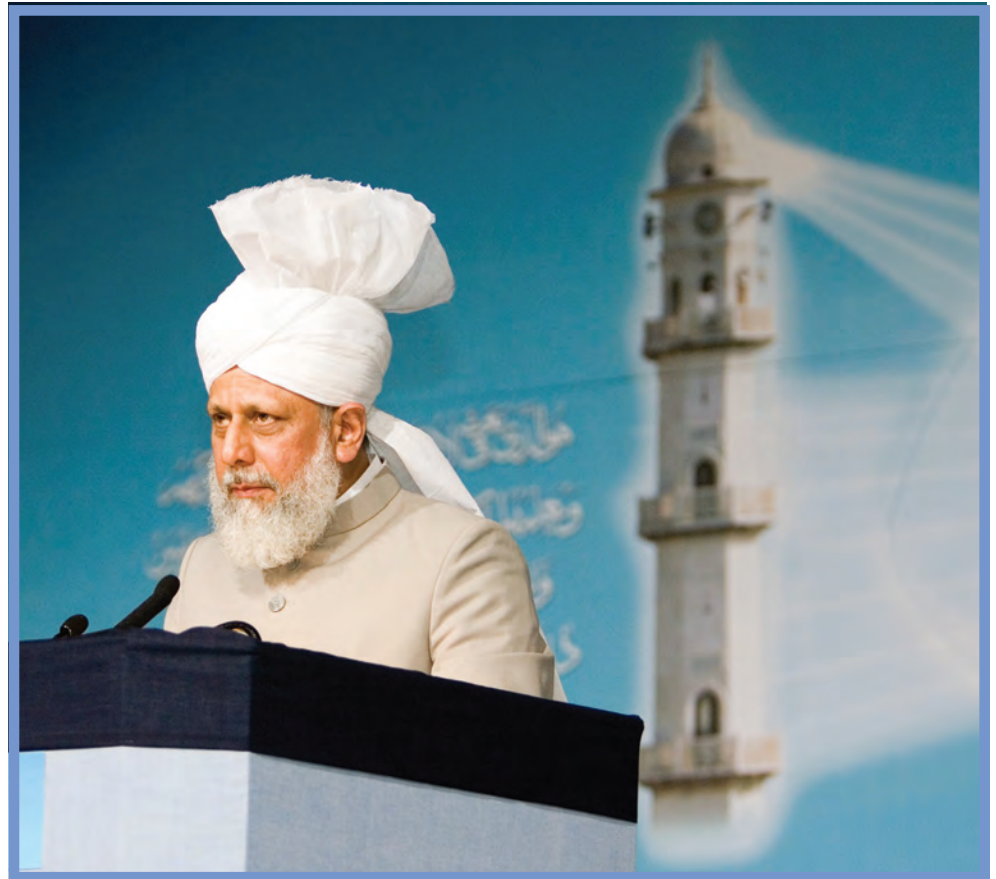
‘Sufficient for us is Allah, and an excellent Guardian is He.’ (3:174)

Summary of a Friday Sermon delivered
Dec. 3, 2010 by Hadhrat Mirza
Masroor Ahmad^{at}, the Head of the
Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{at} (affectionately referred to as Hudhur) said when the enemy tries his utmost in persecuting and eliminating God’s people, he adopts ploys that belie humanity to indiscriminately torture people of all ages. Such brutality is to distant God’s people from following ways that attain God’s pleasure. At such times, steadfast and resolute believers turn ever more to God to seek His help. The Promised Messiah^{as} (has captured the scenario of the enemy exceeding all limits and the resulting condition of the believers in an Urdu poetic verse:

When the enemy exceeds in noise and clamour, Hide do we in the Hidden Friend.

Hudhur said thus is the model of believers who are victimised and indeed, it should be their model. Today, it fits the state of affairs of the Ahmadis alone. The poetic verse makes it clear to the enemy that while he persecutes in the assumption that we will beg for mercy, he is mistaken. We are the followers of the great Prophet Muhammad^{saw} who demonstrated a model of supreme courage and with his power of holiness his Companions too displayed great bravery and regardless of extreme cruelty only ever raised the slogan of One God and only ever turned to Him. Thus, when the commandment is to follow this model, how could we be in step with our opponents? Indeed, all their ploys will rebound on them and they will never see their desires fulfilled because in following the Promised Messiah^{as} we have seen God’s practical testimony to be in his favour. How could we leave our God Who has placed tranquility in the hearts of the Community at every challenging occasion. It is not possible for us to leave our God and make these people our idols and if they are persecuting us in these presumptions, they are wrong. We aspire to be included among those about whom God states: ‘Those to whom men said, ‘People have mustered against you,



therefore fear them,’ but this only increased their faith, and they said, ‘Sufficient for us is Allah, and an excellent Guardian is He.’ (3:174).

Hudhur said the unanimity of the enemy increases us in our faith because we note that it is in fulfilment of a prophecy of the Holy Prophet^{saw} that all the sects will get together against the community that will have God’s support in the time of the Messiah. In the aforementioned verse, God’s quality of being ‘Sufficient’ encompasses every aspect. Who else can better understand the matters of His servants and seize the enemy and declare blessings for the believers? Hudhur said those who ‘hide in their Friend’ endure all difficulties to seek the pleasure of God and God states about them: ‘It is these on whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy, and it is these who are rightly guided.’ (2:158). They do not let go of their God even after enduring the harshest of tortures, on the contrary, they try and hide/absorb in their God even

more. God states that these are the people who will attain spiritual heights and will also be granted material blessings and they indeed are the guided people.

Hudhur said our opponents may insist that as they are in accord with each other they are in the right, but God states that when believers turn to Him in times of trial and safeguard their belief against throngs and remain calm after professing: ‘Surely, to Allah we belong and to Him shall we return.’ (2:157) are indeed the guided ones. The testimony of the Hadith of the Holy Prophet^{saw} goes against them, their unanimity does not make them the guided ones. On the contrary, to continue to endure persecution and to turn to God with ever more sincerity is what makes one the recipient of God’s mercy and a body of people who follow this may be in the minority at the present but it is indeed the guided one. In order to attain God’s mercy and blessings, to be declared guided necessitates that one absorbs/loses oneself in God. God, Who is

not apparent to the materialistic worldly person, but is of course evident everywhere and guides those who believe Him. He is identified from His blessings, is identified from acceptance of prayers and He contends with the enemy Himself.

The Promised Messiah^{as} said, 'lose yourself in the God Who grants all the blessings and Who accepts prayers.' Hudhur said this alone is the formula which has always come in useful for believers. When the world persecutes God's peoples He and His angels shower every blessing on those who 'hide/absorb themselves in their Friend' and declare that regardless of

views and have forgotten the ethics of their profession. Hudhur said there was a time when teachers imparted knowledge to everyone regardless of religious background etc. But today, those who deem themselves to be the best of Muslims are making a mockery of the honourable profession. They claim they do so out of a 'sense of honour for religion'. As a matter of fact it is nothing but the height of ignorance. They do not even understand their profession. God states: '...and let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice...' (5:9) but they are educated ignoramuses who do injustice by following the ignorant

mullah. One solution for the believers for all the persecution is to turn to God, to lose themselves in Him. This persecution is not limited to Pakistan. Oil rich Muslim states are creating divisions of hatred in poorer countries. They claim to be 'People of Arab' and assume that none knows the Holy Qur'an as they do but they do not want

to know the aforementioned Quranic commandment of: '...and let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice...'. They may know the Qur'an very well, but they have forgotten Quranic commandments and this is the very reason why the Messiah was needed to come. Rather than serve Islam, they have brought Islam in disrepute and are responsible for the enmity against Islam. It would not be far-fetched if they were doing everything on the provocation of the enemies of Islam. Contrary to this, the Ahmadiyya Community will InshaAllah take the message of the Holy Prophet^{saw} to the world.

Hudhur said our enemies are enacting their ploys, be that in Pakistan, India, African countries or Indonesia. Recently they have created disorder on an Indonesian island. Persecuted Ahmadis returned to their homes there after a period of time to resettle but extremist mullahs, who are paid by some countries, burnt down their homes and beat them up. As a result they had to abandon their homes and their properties. Hudhur said believers will continue to turn to God when faced with such persecution and this alone is the weapon of our triumph and this is the very weapon which will make the

enemy's evil rebound on him. Apart from this, we do not have anything and the greater the intensity with which we will use this weapon, the quicker we will see the triumph of our Community. The Promised Messiah^{as} said: 'God has repeatedly told me through revelation that whatever will come to pass will be through prayer.' Hudhur read out a few other extracts of the Promised Messiah^{as} about the significance of prayer. Some are as follows:

'The best prayer is that God's pleasure and deliverance from sin is attained.'

'God waits that believers pray to Him so that He may grant'.

'Prayer is like a sweet fountain availed to believers. Whenever a believer wishes, he can satiate himself on this fountain.'

'The great aspect that is achieved with prayer is Divine closeness.'

'Certainly, consider that prayer is a great treasure.'

Hudhur said in this age the weapon of prayer is a significant weapon that has been granted to the Promised Messiah^{as}. And it is through it alone that Lekh Ram, Alexander Dowie and every other opponent met his bad ending. Claimants to demolish Qadian were also contended with through prayer. Those who called Ahmadiyyat a cancer and claimed to reduce us to holding beggar's bowl were also contended with prayer insomuch that not even a sign of them remained. Hudhur said today too, the opposing storms will rebound through prayer and the world will witness the progress of Ahmadiyyat. The Promised Messiah^{as} said that the correct station of prayer is Salat, thus we should offer two Nafil Prayers for our persecuted Ahmadi brothers and sisters and make it obligatory on us. Hudhur said the following quote of the Promised Messiah^{as} should always be remembered: 'When a believer's prayer attains complete sincerity and absolute devotion to God then God feels mercy towards him.' Hudhur explained that in order to attain complete sincerity and absolute devotion to God, it is needed to lose oneself in the Hidden Friend. This will safeguard one as if in a fortified enclave guarded by armed soldiers. May God enable us to understand this very important point and also to put it in practice.

In conclusion Hudhur read the Quranic prayer: '... 'O our Lord, pour forth steadfastness upon us, and make our steps firm, and help us against the disbelieving people.' (2:251)

'Prayer is like a sweet fountain availed to believers. Whenever a believer wishes, he can satiate himself on this fountain.'

the brutality of the enemy, it is these people who are recipients of God's mercy and blessings and are indeed the guided ones. In addition, guidance of the world is also associated with them.

Hudhur said he would say to all those Ahmadis who are currently enduring persecution and who write to him to put greater focus in their prayers. Those who are not directly troubled should pray for their brothers and sisters. They should not be perturbed by their problems of worldly nature and should remember their brother and sisters who are severely victimized. A true believer feels the pain and troubles of his brother as his own trouble.

Addressing Ahmadis of all the Jama'ats around the world, Hudhur drew attention to the persecuted brothers and said that each Ahmadi should offer two Nafil Prayer a day for the persecuted Ahmadis, those who are deprived of their civic rights through vicious laws. If Each Ahmadi presents his/her restlessness before God in an increased manner, God will take them in His refuge in a greater way. Hudhur said Ahmadi students write to him about how their peers harass them, so much so that even some teachers and lecturers resort to despicable

Ibn Khaldun & The Environment

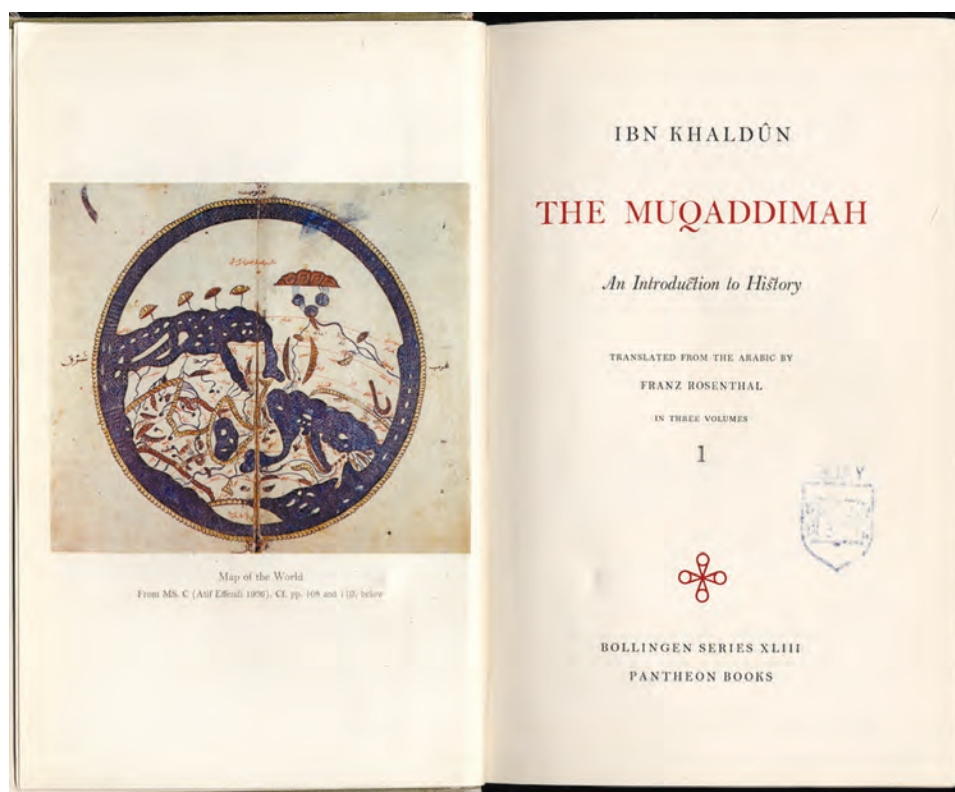
By Lubna R. Malik

The physical environment determines culture. This is the crux of environmental, or climatic, determinism that the Arab sociologist, Ibn Khaldun, promoted in the late fourteenth century. Ibn Khaldun's official name was Abd al-Rahman Ibn Mohammad. He was born in 1332 in Tunisia in an upper class family that had migrated to Tunis from Spain. A Yemeni by ancestry, Ibn Khaldun enjoyed the intellectual circles to which his family belonged. Because of his family status, he frequently met political and intellectual leaders of the African Muslim states when they came to visit his family members.

When Ibn Khaldun was a young boy, he studied in Tunisia and Fez in Morocco. Both of his parents passed away from the Plague when he was 17 years old. During his studies, Ibn Khaldun studied the Holy Qur'an, the Prophet Muhammad's^{saw} *hadith*, general Islamic *shariah*, Islamic *fiqh* under the Maliki school, Arabic literature, philosophy, mathematics, and astronomy. With his strong education, Ibn Khaldun began working for the Egyptian Sultan Barquq in his late teenage years. He later went on to work for the rulers of Tunis, Fez, Grenada, and Biaja (in North Africa).

Because of the political conflicts in North Africa, Ibn Khaldun migrated to Grenada in Spain in 1375. However, because of his political actions in North Africa, Grenada's ruler quickly expelled him and he went to Algeria for four years. There, Ibn Khaldun settled in a small village, Qalat Ibn Salama, for four years. There he wrote *Muqaddimah*. In his first volume of his most famous written work, Ibn Khaldun wrote a world history, focusing on psychological, economic, environmental, and social facts that contributed to the advancement of human civilization. Ibn Khaldun analyzed the way in which group relationships operated to produce new civilizations and political power that rhythmically led to the rise and fall of different civilizations.

Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* attracted a lot of attention for his focus on the effect of the environment on history as a constraint on human actions. This early form of environmental determinism by Ibn Khaldun argued that physical geography and climate influenced the way humans processed information, which then affected their behavior. As this affected more and



more people, the culture of the greater society was affected. For example, Ibn Khaldun argued that warm environments in Africa promoted laziness in people's thought processes; that coupled with the harsh restrictions on types of appropriate education led to the gradual decline of Muslim intellectual thought. In another example, Ibn Khaldun explained that those in sub-Saharan Africa had dark skin because of the hot climate, and not because they were of some type of inferior race.

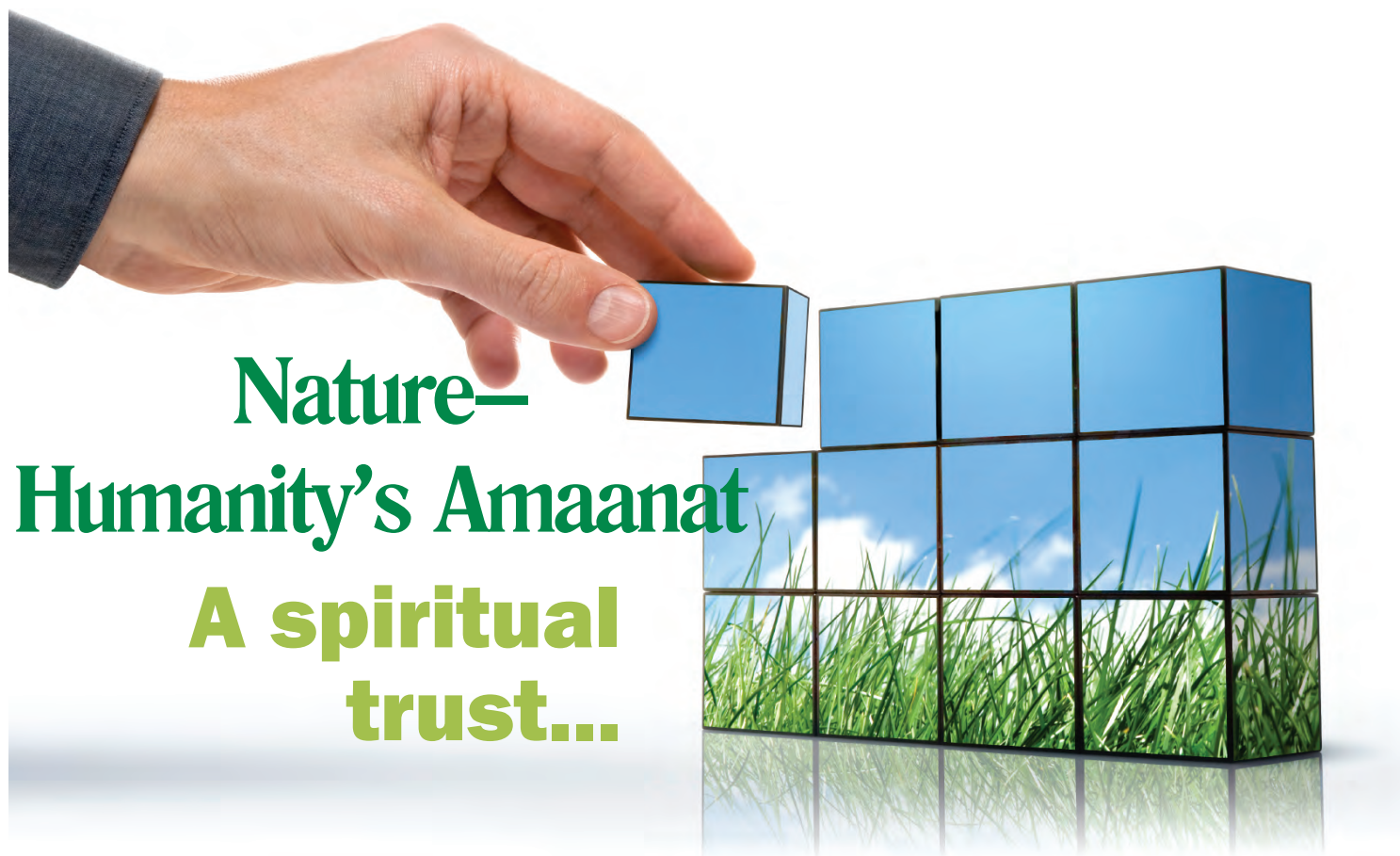
In his first volume of *Muqaddimah* Ibn Khaldun also spoke of how different people's environments affected their general lifestyles. Thus, one's physical habitat, climate, soil, food, and different way of acquiring survival needs were directly linked to the physical environments they lived in. Even behavioral characteristics like inclination to share and work together are dependent on the environment. For example, those who live in rough environments where they must depend on one another develop a culture of sharing and supporting one another. In environments with plentiful vegetation and good land for farming purposes, societies needed to work together less and, thus, were less inclined to

share. Similarly, one's health is a reflection of his physical environment. Thus, if one is living in a wealthy environment with lots of wholesome foods and automatic transportation options, he is less likely to be eating less or exercising regularly to keep his health good.

Although much of Ibn Khaldun's observations were not based on quantitative data, Ibn Khaldun's views were largely confirmed by later work by Charles Darwin and other evolutionary biologists and philosophers who came more than 500 years after Ibn Khaldun published *Muqaddimah*.

After moving around North Africa for a few years, Ibn Khaldun settled in Egypt for the last quarter century of his life. While in Egypt, Ibn Khaldun enjoyed a comfortable life of fame where he was appointed as the Chief Judge for the Maliki school of Islamic law and also served as a lecturer at Al-Azhar University. He died in Egypt in 1395 at the age of 63.

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Nature— Humanity's Amaanat

A spiritual trust...

By Rabia Mir

The ecological crisis is, at heart, a crisis of values. The late historian Lynn White placed the responsibility of this crisis squarely on the shoulders of religion, particularly on the Christian tradition. He argued that because the Christian narrative centralizes humanity in creation and asserts mankind's dominion over the natural world, it is fundamentally exploitative of the environment. Other thinkers have gone on to ascribe this exploitative streak to all three of the Abrahamic faiths arguing their anthropocentric narratives to be environmentally destructive. But this could not be further from the truth.

The modern economic system of capitalism defines the natural environment to be a mass of resources meant to be claimed and used, without regard for the consequences and without reference to the

limitations of those resources. Religion, on the other hand, defines the environment as an aspect of Creation and thus demands that it be respected as such. Islam, in particular, holds the view that nature is an *amaanat* or a trust bestowed upon humanity by God. This article will discuss in depth humanity's relationship with the environment as outlined by Quranic injunction, modernity's relationship with the environment as outlined by the prevalent economic system, and finally establish that quite contrary to White's claim, it is the abandonment of religion that has resulted in our current level of environmental destruction, for religion espouses all those actions, which are fundamentally beneficial to the environment.

Environment as a Trust

Islam, a system of beliefs that prides itself on providing direction on every aspect of life, is not at all indifferent to our

engagement with the natural environment. Islamic belief systems subscribe to the viewpoint that indeed humanity does have dominion over the natural world as it has been created by God for humanity's sake. The Qur'an declares that nature has been created for the purpose of benefitting mankind. In Chapter 6, Verse 14, Allah says that *He has pressed into service the things He has created for you in the earth, varying in colors*. But it declares this not in a spirit of dominion or control but in the spirit of a trust. As Muslims we believe that God is the Gracious, the Provider. He is not obligated to provide for us but does so out of kindness, and magnanimity. Thus, the creation of the environment for our benefit is a favor, not a right. As such it is a gift. And in Islamic teaching, a gift must be cared for, held in high regard, in order to properly honor it. This is where the notion of *amaanat* or trust comes to the fore.

Honoring this Trust by Abiding to Principles of Simplicity, Contentment, and Community

The question arises as to how we are to honor this trust. We are to honor it by using it for its intended purpose. Islam, unlike some extremist environmental groups that call for a revolution that will dismantle the modern capitalist system and usher in a return to a less “eco-destructive” era, does not advocate abstinence, as such, from the venture of human progression. However, neither does Islam condone the modern economic system’s philosophy of environmental exploitation. Instead, Islam provides guidelines as to how to live a life that inculcates those qualities, which if adhered to, would spell a reversal, albeit a slow one, of environmental degradation (and which, if it had been adhered to, would have arguably prevented the degradation altogether). These guidelines provide a code of conduct for venerating the trust bestowed upon us. For the purposes of this article, I will only outline the three distinctive shades which Islam and nearly every religion in the world invokes in the coloration of its adherents’ character and all of these if acted upon foster a most healthy relationship of our species with our natural environment. These three qualities are simplicity, contentment, and community.

Simplicity

Simplicity is espoused by all religions and particularly by Islam as a spiritual and social virtue. In its social context, simplicity, as per Islam, is integral in maintaining economic stability. This reference to economic stability refers not only to currency, but also, in essence, to the physical resources that propel that currency. If the Islamic commandment of simplicity was

adhered to, the exploitation of the world’s physical resources would be vastly reduced, so much so that arguably our current condition of diminishing resources and the feared economic downturn would not be a looming threat.

Capitalism, on the other hand, not only condones and encourages extravagance but also perpetuates it by creating false needs, i.e., wants that become needs. Consumerism with its emphasis on material gains and comforts insists that everyone should and must have everything material, which of course places immense strain on our natural resources. In essence, Islam, and religion in general, endorses simplicity as a way of life. Simplicity engenders humility towards the natural world as it is an outlook based on necessity and is deferential to natural limits, unlike the modern day approach which is deferential not to natural limits but only to economic gain. It is

the abandonment of religion that has thus resulted in an emphasis on materialism which has leeched our planet of its natural resources.

Contentment

If simplicity is the way of life insisted upon by religion, then contentment is the intent behind that way of life. Instead of vying for more and more, looking at those with more and haranguing after it, Islamic teaching prescribes that man express gratitude for what he has and accept it as his lot, even *while* he strives for a better state of affairs. What does this have to do with the environment? The great Islamic thinker Seyyed Hossein Nasr, writes in his book that “contentment with our state of being...is the very opposite of the sin of covetousness.”¹ And covetousness is what is fostered by and facilitates consumerism. Exposed to the media as we are and



constantly bombarded with ads that display the luxurious lifestyles of the wealthy and all that they have, we have become more and more susceptible to the vice of covetousness. If we can rid ourselves of this characteristic of wanting ever more and instead be content with what we have, then we can truly aspire to a life of simplicity. Contentment thus is the starting point of simplicity. And both, the first by cultivating character, and the second by realizing that character are integral to Islamic faith. Not only are they integral to Islamic faith, but both are also the core characteristics of an eco-friendly individual, and both deeply contradict the current modern standards of satisfaction and success. Thus, it is the abandonment of these values of simplicity and contentment, that is, the abandonment of those ideologies that uphold these values, which has resulted in the current consumption trends which have wreaked havoc upon the natural environment.

Community

The final quality or individual characteristic that Islam insists upon inculcating in every true member in its fold is a sense of communal obligation generated by a sense of responsibility towards one's community. In Islam, the individual is valued. However, greater emphasis is placed upon the individual's contribution to the community, whether it is in the form of service or alms, rather than upon the individual himself as an isolated entity, and his triumphs as such. The reason behind this is that Islam recognizes that man is a constituent of a larger social grouping, subscription to which formulates his very identity. Islam encourages this kind of identity formation wherein the individual becomes defined not only by his relationships but by the fulfillment of his obligations towards those relationships. The benefit of this is that it consolidates communities. Before I delve into a brief

analysis of how such consolidation benefits the environment, it is important to highlight the alternative social conduct that is encouraged by capitalism and its effect on the environment.

The capitalist economic system, predominantly in the West, promotes an individualism that not only supersedes communal obligations but also undercuts communal bonds.

There is nothing wrong with individualism. But like a nation whose multiple vying factions must be kept in check if the country as a whole is to progress, individual wills must sometimes be curbed so as to benefit the community. This philosophy is contradictory to the capitalist economic system as the individual is made to believe that he is entitled to achieving all manner of material happiness, regardless of the cost. Thus, the capitalist system reaps rewards at the expense of our natural resources (not to mention at the expense of much of the third world). Furthermore, by undercutting community identification, identity formation comes to be based upon consumerism. What we buy becomes our identity. There is no more succinct way of describing the method that capitalists use to encourage consumption than the saying "you are what you eat" or what you wear, or in essence "what you buy." And there is no better way of subtly but effectively declaring consumption vital than by emphasizing its importance in identity formation. On the other hand, Islam and other religions rely on identity formation through community affiliation, which undercuts consumerism since identity formation is not linked to material acquisitions. Religions, thereby, are not only instrumental in safeguarding natural resources, but also encourage in their group members a social conscience. This social conscience, if directed properly will inevitably translate into a code of environmental care, and in the case of Islam, will amount to honoring the trust

with which we have been bestowed.

Conclusion

Contrary to the assertions of Lynn White's intellectual descendants, religion is not the cause of environmental degradation. Rather, it is the abandonment of core religious values that is the cause of our current ecological crisis. The capitalist economic system with its stress on monetary gain and strain on natural resources has resulted in an environmental catastrophe. Environmentalists, social scientists, politicians and policymakers, all are desperately trying to comprehend and address this impending environmental disaster, but as of yet to no avail. Islam, on the other hand, does not provide a pill that only suppresses the symptoms of the disease. Instead, it offers a comprehensive code of conduct so as to address this problem at its very root. Islam demands of its followers, adherence to a lifestyle that not only ensures the preservation of our natural resources but also safeguards them. Islam achieves this by bestowing upon mankind the mantle of custodianship over the natural world. As custodians we are bearers of a God given trust, which we are morally obligated to honor by operating within prescribed parameters. The three defining parameters of our relationship with the environment are the traits of simplicity, contentment, and community. These three traits embody those values, which if adopted in their true spirit would reverse the environmental conundrum which we face today. For, the ecological crisis, at heart, is a crisis of values, and Islamic values are more than well suited for preventing and resolving such crises.

Endnotes

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An Amazing **Prophecy** of the Holy Qur'an

By Imam Naseem Mahdi

It's clear that climate change is real—and a real threat to life on this planet. And this change has been made manifest in a number of different ways, from the rapid warming of the planet, to the rise in sea level and the increase in natural disasters.

Sustainability.
Living Green.
Carbon credits.
We hear about
them almost every day.
Today these environmental
issues are given the utmost
importance. But, of course,
this hasn't always been the
case. Back in the time of
the Holy Prophet^{sa}, nobody
had heard of climate
change, the ozone layer, or
pollution.

This makes it all the more surprising, then, that the Holy Qur'an deals with issues surrounding the destruction of the environment with such clarity and accuracy. The predictions about man's destruction of the environment that we find in the Holy Qur'an are very accurate; indeed, these predictions provide a further proof that the Holy Qur'an really is a divine document. But first, we need to see what the state of



the environment is in right now.

The Environment Today

It's clear that climate change is real—and a real threat to life on this planet. And this change has been made manifest in a number of different ways, from the rapid warming of the planet, to the rise in sea level and the increase in natural

disasters.

The most evident symptom of climate change is a general increase in temperature. Since 1880, average temperatures around the world have climbed almost one degree Celsius—and much of that climb has taken place in the last few decades. This may seem, on the surface, to be a small change—after all, what difference does a degree make? But the reality

is that, for the most part, average temperatures on earth remain very stable, even over very long periods of time. Moreover, any small changes in the average temperature can cause major changes in the environment.

The following example will help illustrate the impact. During the last ice age, much of the northern U.S. was covered in ice sheets about a mile high. What was the average temperature then? It was only five degrees (Celsius) colder than it is today. In other words, a difference of five degrees meant the difference between sheets of ice and livable land. And that means that we cannot afford to take one degree lightly.

But there's another alarming piece of this puzzle. Not only is the planet getting warmer, the rate at which it is doing so is accelerating. Recent studies show that the last two decades were the hottest in the last four hundred years—and possibly the warmest for several thousand years. And the last ten years have been, on average, the hottest ten years recorded since 1850.

That heat is responsible for another change to our environment—rising sea levels. While temperatures are rising everywhere, the average temperatures in places such as Alaska and western Canada have risen at twice the rate. That means that arctic ice is disappearing rapidly. Some estimates even predict that the arctic region might have its first completely ice-free summer by 2040.

One reason for this is that industrialization and deforestation have increased the concentrations of water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide in the atmosphere. These gases trap heat near the Earth's surface. And while we currently deposit about 1,000 tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, this problem appears to be getting worse. China will soon take the number one spot from the US as the leading greenhouse gas offender, and is planning to build new coal-fired power plants at the rate of one per week for the next decade.

In addition to the slow damage done to earth from climate change, there are more dramatic changes afoot. In 2003, there were 337 natural disasters reported, up from 261 in 1990. And in 2006, natural disasters affected 254 million people worldwide—three times more than were

affected in 1990. Many experts believe that this increased frequency in natural disasters—including heat waves and tropical storms—is partly attributable to climate change. Moreover, the fear is that, as the world climate changes, these disasters will become even more commonplace.

Creating disorder

So, the question to ask becomes: what is the cause of climate change? The answer, it seems, is us. A 2007 report by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change stated that most global warming has, more than likely, been caused by **human actions**. In other words, we are the ones responsible for the increasing disorder in the planet and this is precisely the amazing prophecy the Holy Quran made 1,500 years ago that while perfection and order is seen in all that God has created man would cause disorder and pollution.

The Qur'an states: "[Allah is He] Who has created seven heavens in harmony. No incongruity canst thou see in the creation of the Gracious God. Then look again. Seest thou any flaw?" (67:4)

Here, the Holy Qur'an points to the fact that God has created the earth in perfect harmony—there are no incongruities. Moreover, Allah is responsible for the perfect equilibrium of the universe: "And the heaven He has raised high and set up the measure, that you may not exceed the measure. So weigh all things with justice and fall not short of the measure" (55:8-10).

Here, we are told that Allah has created the heaven and the universe in equilibrium, and we are enjoined to also maintain equilibrium, by acting with justice.

The Qur'an also tells us that disorder is created when man is in authority. Here it might be instructive to look at the Arabic words "*fasada*" and "*fasaad*." It is usually assumed that these words refer to wickedness and mischief. But if we look closer, we can see that these words—and the verses they are used in—also refer to the state of disorder that the earth is in right now.

Edward Lane's authoritative *Arabic-English Lexicon* defines the word "*fasaad*" as not just meaning something evil or corrupt, but also

something that is "in a state of disorder or disturbance, destruction, annihilation, consumption, waste, or ruin." Similarly, the word "*fasaad*" can be used to mean anything that is in a "spoiled, deteriorated, or tainted, state." In other words, both of these words describe accurately the situation that our environment is in now—a state of disorder.

More importantly, a close study of the Holy Qur'an reveals that in several verses, our current environmental dilemma has been foretold. The Holy Qur'an states,

"Corruption (fasaad) has spread on land and sea because of what men's hands have wrought, that He may make them taste the fruit of some of their doings, so that they may turn back from evil." (30:42)

In another verse, Allah says, "And when he is in authority, he runs about in the land to create disorder (*fasaad*) in it and destroys the tilth and the progeny (of man); and Allah loves not disorder (*fasaad*)" (2:206). And finally, Allah says, "Seek not to create mischief in the land. Verily, Allah loves not those who create mischief" (28:78).

A most interesting thing worthy of mention here is that the verse talks about the destruction of species also...the Arabic word "*nasl*" translated here as 'progeny (of man)' has the wider connotation of species.

All of these verses use some form of the word "*fasaad*." And taken together, all three point to the fact that when humans overstep their authority on this earth, they create disorder. And while these verses commonly are assumed to mean moral disorder, they also clearly point to environmental disorder. Note that the Qur'an talks of corruption specifically "on land and sea," and that man is accused of destroying "the tilth and 'progeny (species)'". Both of these verses use language specific to the environment.

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The Balance

Al-Mizan — Keeping Equilibrium in Environment

By Dr. Khaula Rehman

The Himalayan glaciers, which supply drinking water to more than a billion people, may be threatened not only by warming from greenhouse gases, but also by soot generated far below on the plains of India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh.

Researchers believe that high levels of soot over the vast plains to the south and west of the Himalayas may be speeding the melting of glaciers. According to the researchers' models, beginning each year in April, high soot levels in the atmosphere absorb sunlight, warming the air. As the monsoon season starts in May, the warmed air draws in extra moisture and pulls it over the Tibetan Plateau. This process drops increasing amounts of rain on the glaciers, speeding the melting process.

Glaciers are melting everywhere and it is predicted that many of the coastal cities of the world are in danger from flooding and hurricanes. Scientists say that changes to the flow of meltwater as a result of global warming are likely to have a 'severe' impact on food and water security in some areas. Melting glaciers in the Himalayas will have severe impacts on the region's five major river basins, the Indus, Ganges, Brahmaputra, Yangtze and Yellow River.

Why is humanity in this sorry state of affairs? Is it because we have not been genuinely appreciative of Allah's blessing and the balance He has created for us as well as animals and plants, in ensuring our food chain, water supply and ecology? Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

"The earth have We (Allah) spread out, and set therein firm mountains and caused everything to grow therein in proper proportion. And We have made for you therein means of livelihood, and also for all those for whom you do not provide. And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures thereof and We

send it not down except in a known measure. And We send impregnating winds, then We send down water from the clouds, then We give it to you to drink; and you are not the ones to store it up." (The Holy Qur'an 15:20-23).

At the time of the revelation of these verses mankind had no knowledge of the water cycle and how the glaciers and subterranean water were acting as a reservoir of water for humanity. Nevertheless, the Holy Qur'an alludes to storage mechanisms or reservoirs that man could not possibly recreate, striking us with the epiphany of God's Omniscience! Allah has in His infinite wisdom, set up an amazing spectrum of life on this planet Earth. According to one estimate it is calculated that there may be as many as 30 million existing species of animals and plants; and there is a food supply for the weakest to the physically strongest of animals, as alluded to in the verses just quoted, *'and also for all those for whom you do not provide.'* Whenever this balance is disturbed in any significant pattern, species go into extinction.

To get a feel for the Providence in all different ecologies on our planet Earth, let us take the example of the jelly fish. Made up of 2 percent protein, 2 percent mineral salts and 96 percent water, jelly fish have three main parts: the round umbrella-like bodies or bells which propel the animals with a pulsating motion; tentacles that sting and immobilize prey; and oral arms or flaps that are used to eat their prey. With this basic equipment, jelly fish manage to defend themselves from danger, make daily and seasonal journeys, stay together and occupy all the oceans of the world. Simple in design, fragile in build, jelly fish have the least of the complex features many animals use to survive. Yet for 650 million years, they've lived and prospered on this watery planet. The Holy Qur'an alludes to such a phenomena in the following words:

"And there is no creature that moves in the earth but it is for Allah to provide it with sustenance. And He knows its lodging and its home. All this is recorded in a clear Book." (The Holy Qur'an 11:7)

Many animals could not harm their ecologies or habitat as the habitat naturally corrected any mild imbalances. However, we humans with their superior intellect have come to a point where we have adversely affected our only home, the planet Earth, despite the warning from the All Knowing Allah in the chapter Rehman of the Holy Qur'an. The title of the chapter means the Gracious God, a very poignant reminder that it is out of His sheer Grace that He has created us and given us a wonderful abode; Allah says,

"The sun and the moon run their courses according to a fixed reckoning. And the stemless plants and the trees humbly submit to His will. And the heaven He has raised high and set up a measure, that you may not transgress the measure. So weigh all things in justice and fall not short of the measure." (The Holy Qur'an 55:6-10)

An Arabic term used here is Al-Mizan that means balance. The term Al-Mizan has been used three times, in these short verses, highlighting that the balance and the equilibrium in God's creation is to be matched with the poise in human actions, to adequately reflect our role of the custodians of the planet. Moreover, it is indeed a miracle that the Holy Qur'an talks of a 'fixed reckoning,' in reference to the motion of the sun and moon, ten centuries before Sir Isaac Newton more precisely described the laws of nature and gravity keeping the heavenly bodies in order. What is further amazing that the Holy Qur'an uses the visible and the tangible as a metaphor to deliver a moral lesson of observing the balance, poise and justice in our daily lives. In the past centuries Muslims interpreted these verses as only pertaining to their personal lives but with the additional knowledge that humanity has gathered in the last two centuries, it has become glaringly obvious that the Holy Qur'an



This photo shows the Esmark glacier on the Norwegian Arctic archipelago of Svalbard, which has shrunk by 3.5 kilometers since 1966. Melting glaciers are only one of the many ecological issues threatening us. Learn about the specifics of the ecological catastrophe threatening mankind in the documentary by the former Vice President of USA, Al Gore, *The Inconvenient Truth*.

is delivering a much broader message of environmental conservation here. To reassure any critic of this interpretation, let me quote the verses that follow and describe the animal and plant life of the Earth rather than human communities or culture:

“And He (Allah) has set the earth for His creatures; therein are all kinds of fruit and palm-trees with sheaths, And grain with its husk and fragrant plants. Which, then, of the favors of your Lord will you twain deny, O men and Jinn?”
(The Holy Qur’an 55:11-14)

Sir Zafrullah Khan writes about the order, organization, beauty and purpose in God’s creation of this universe, in his book *Islam: its meaning for modern man*:

“The whole of God’s creation is in harmony. There is no discord, disorder, or incongruity. Everything is adjusted and coordinated so as completely to fulfill the purpose for which it was created (67:2-5). Such disorder or maladjustment as may be observed results from misuse or contravention of the laws governing the universe.

The purpose of the creation of the universe is to aid man in achieving the object for

which he has been created. This is part of the measure of God’s unlimited bounty to man.”

Allah created man, the apex and crown of all creations. He endowed him with great natural powers and qualities and the capacity to become the mirror in which the Divine attributes are reflected. Man has been made custodian of the planet Earth, the Qur’anic term being ‘vicegerent upon earth.’ Man has a purpose, and he is accountable in respect of it. In the phraseology of the Qur’an, the principle of accountability is expressed in terms of man having to be ‘brought back’ to God. The purpose of man’s creation is that he should receive the impress of God’s attributes and should become a manifestation of them within the limits of his capacities. God’s favor in bestowing upon man all that was needed for the fulfillment of the purpose of life and in subjecting to his service the whole of the universe and all its phenomena is repeatedly stressed in the Holy Qur’an and man is exhorted to reflect upon, and to draw lessons from, all these phenomena. Allah says:

“He it is Who sends down water for you from the clouds, from it you have your drink and there grows by it vegetation on which you pasture your beasts. Therewith He also grows for you corn, and the olive, and the date

palm, and the grape, and all kinds of fruit. Surely in that is a Sign for a people who reflect. He has constrained into service for you the night and the day, and the sun and the moon and the stars too have been constrained into your service by His command. Surely, in that are Signs for a people who make use of their reason. He has constrained into service the things He has created for you in the earth, of diverse hues. Surely, in that is a Sign for a people who take heed. He it is Who has subjected to you the sea, that you may take therefrom fresh flesh to eat, and the ornaments that you wear. And thou seest the ships ploughing it, that you may journey thereby, and that you may seek of His bounty, and that you may be grateful.” (The Holy Qur’an 16:11-15)

And again:

“Have you not seen that Allah has pressed for you into service whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and has completed His favors on you, both externally and internally? And among men there are some who dispute concerning Allah, without knowledge or guidance or an illuminating Book.” (The Holy Qur’an 31:21)

The verses that are fundamental and primary in regards to our ecological responsibilities are the ones with the phrase of Al-Mizan as discussed above. When we relate these verses with the several other verses of the Holy Qur’an we have a very coherent and cogent thesis emerging from it, reminding us to keep the equilibrium in our environment.

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Inner Transformation and Environmental Crisis

By Shazia Sohail

In order to achieve the common goal of averting the impending environmental crisis, mankind has to come together and work together in an unprecedented manner. It would not only require the cooperation of every nation, but the voluntary participation of every individual, and their level of commitment and restraint would be a testament to their values and beliefs since most of the work would have to be carried out at an individual level, unsupervised and uncompensated. There are many impediments to such unity, not least of which are geographical, economic, and ideological differences. For such unity to transpire the world would need leaders who are commensurate to the task. We see from Quranic teachings that not only do they have the potential to produce such leaders, but they also put to rest, with a few simple words, all the differences that divide mankind.



It is said in the Holy Quran:

*“Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is as a lustrous niche, wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a glittering star. It is lit from a blessed tree — an olive — neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would well-nigh glow forth even though fire touched it not. Light upon light! Allah guides to His light whomsoever He wills. And Allah sets forth parables to men, and Allah knows all things full well.” (24:36)*¹

All the components required for a perfect environment have been encapsulated in a most lovely and delicate manner here. It is a metaphor that speaks of five things: a niche, a glass globe, a lamp, oil which is neither of the east nor west, and fire. While numerous interpretations could be attributed to this verse, one that comes most readily to mind in the context of the environment, which is the niche that protects all life on Earth, is that the quality, or

the radiance, of this niche is reflective of the quality of those living inside it. The metaphor unfolds beautifully if we read the lamp to be a leader, and the glass as the community around this leader. The attributes of the leader, or the lamp, are the most critical component in this line of reasoning.

The lamp is lit by oil which is neither of the east nor of the west. The oil has to be the love and compassion for mankind. This love is such that it does not discriminate between the people of the east or west and is so completely entrenched in the nature of this leader, as is the love of a mother for her children, that it would almost spring forth without fire or love of God, to ignite it. Thus, these prophetic words could be read to mean that the love of God is the fire that will ignite compassion for mankind in the hearts of individuals. Consequently, these individuals would inspire their communities to spread their radiance to the environment.

One might argue that economic sanctions or punitive measures would drive the austerity required to avert environmental crisis. While this might be true to some extent one cannot help but wonder how a country like the United States, which is also a principal

contributor to the overall world pollution and climate change, will produce leaders who will have the ability to unite on an issue that would impose a collective punishment on the people who would then be expected to re-elect them.

The problem is compounded by the ethical ambiguity that surrounds the concept of the rights of the future generations. Earnest Partridge of UC Riverside has summarized it such:

“And while most would agree that it would be morally reprehensible for our generation to “trash the future” in a spree of resource depletion and environmental destruction, thus devastating the lives of successors we will never know, we are hard-pressed to explicate the ethical concepts or to articulate the ethical theory which might best express and condemn such moral dereliction. Fundamental to this puzzle is the apparent non-reciprocity across generations, typified by the old cynical taunt, “what has posterity ever done for me?” Strictly speaking, *nothing*.” Also “These objections to the “rights approach” have been based upon a few allegedly “essential” differences between actual persons and future (or “potential”) persons — most prominently, their *temporal remoteness, incapacity, non-actuality, and indeterminacy*.”²

Partridge goes on to effectively argue against such way of thinking but not without constant allusion to moral values. Few would dispute that, more often than not, morality is rooted in eventual accountability to a higher authority, and is best nurtured by one’s spirituality or closeness to God Almighty. A deeply spiritual person is driven purely by his or her desire to please God, and does not need external incentives or supervision to do the right thing. Rather, he or she becomes a source of inspiration to others.

There are numerous morals that come into play when one decides that one has a responsibility towards one’s concurrent as well as future generations, and the acuteness of this awareness will have a direct impact on one’s spirituality. When a man switches from a long to a short shower, or turns off the water while brushing his teeth, his sense of integrity is enhanced because this he does privately when no one is watching. When a woman starts to reuse paper bags, newspapers and magazines to wrap gifts instead of expensive

wrapping paper she relinquishes a bit of her vanity. When a family comes together to paint their roof white they are collectively acknowledging that they are an integral part of the global community. Organizing an in-home recycling center requires inner discipline to be cultivated. Driving a smaller car or a hybrid requires some humility and lack of ostentation. Unplugging appliances to save electricity gives rise to gratitude to the Almighty God Who enabled us to harness forces of nature for our own benefit. Thus there is no doubt that inculcation of moral values will have a direct impact on one’s efficacy as a responsible environmentalist and vice versa.

The guiding principle for morality is found in the verse 16:91 of the Holy Qur’an:

*Verily, Allah requires you to abide by Adl (justice), and Ihsan (to treat with grace), and Ita’i Dhi’l Qurba (give like the giving of kin to kin); and forbids Fahsha (vice of which the knowledge is confined to the doer), and Munkar (manifest evil), and Baghy transgression.*³

Adl or justice requires that one should return to others the good or evil to the extent to which one receives it from them. Higher than justice is the stage of *Ihsan* (goodness) when one would do good to others regardless of what sort of treatment one anticipates from them, and even if one is treated poorly by them. At this stage one’s conduct is not prompted by considerations of reciprocity.⁴

Ita’i Dhi’l Qurba (giving like kindred) is the last and highest stage of moral development where one does abundant good to others prompted by a natural impulse. The condition of a person at this stage resembles that of a mother who selflessly serves her offspring, for a long period of time, with absolutely no regard for reciprocity. The leader mentioned at the outset would have to be at this moral stage to serve as an inspiration to those around him, who would in turn illuminate the environment.⁵

This subject has been broached conversely in the same verse by defining the various types and degrees of vice one should refrain from. *Fahsha* are secret

vices, *Munkar* is manifest evil, seen and condemned by others, and *Baghy* are the vices that are not only seen, felt and denounced by others but which do them positive harm. Thus in one small and simple verse the Holy Qur’an enjoins us to refrain from every conceivable vice, to the best of our ability.

If one were to point to a specific vice that is affecting the environmental crisis one would have to say it is the wasteful use of precious natural resources. The Holy Qur’an, in a most unambiguous manner, tells us that wastefulness stems from ingratitude (17:28),⁶ and the inevitable result of ingratitude is Allah’s displeasure and a reduction in His favors (14:8).⁷ But one is immediately heartened by His promise to avert punishment in response to gratitude (4:148).⁸

The task of averting or reversing the ill effects of pollution on the environment seems daunting when one looks at today’s fragmented world. But environmental crisis is perhaps the only issue that has the capacity to motivate mankind to band together. Once that happens not only would we be able to restore the environment to its desirable balance but also cure other global maladies like poverty, illiteracy and wars.

Endnotes

1. The Holy Quran, Arabic Text with English Translation and Short Commentary, 2002 Islam International Publications Ltd., UK, page 721. <http://www.alislam.org/quran/tafseer/?page=721®ion=EN&CR=>
2. On the Rights of Future Generation, by Earnest Partridge, UC Riverside 1990. <http://gadfly.igc.org/papers/orfg.htm>
3. The Holy Quran, Arabic Text with English Translation and Short Commentary, 2002 Islam International Publications Ltd., UK, page 536. <http://www.alislam.org/quran/tafseer/?page=536®ion=EN&CR=>
4. Ibid, page 537.
5. Ibid.
6. Verily, the extravagant are brothers of satans, and Satan is ungrateful to his Lord (17:28).
7. And remember also the time when your Lord declared, ‘If you are grateful, I will, surely, bestow more favors on you; but if you are ungrateful, then know that My punishment is severe indeed (14:8).
8. Why should Allah punish you, if you are thankful and if you believe? And Allah is Appreciating, All-Knowing (4:148).

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Finding Common Ground for **Christians** and **Muslims**

By Peter Barmus

I have wondered for some time why there is not much interest in tearing apart the barriers that divide Christians from Muslims. And the more I explored this, the more I discovered that the barriers are not as formidable as we have been led to believe. Setting aside the hysterics of the media regarding ‘Muslim terrorism’, the main obstacle that I have found is pride. A friend once asked me, “What is wrong with saying, ‘I’m a proud Christian’?” My reply was, “If you say you’re a proud Christian, then it will be hard for you to love those who are not Christians.”

In order to properly understand not just what Christians and Muslims have in com-

mon, but what the Christian world has learned from Islam, one need only look at a math book. Every number therein is of Arabic origin and many of the concepts by which these numbers are manipulated for engineering and scientific purposes were devised during the Golden Age of Islam, by Muslim scholars. Imagine if royalties were owed for every equation responsible for the achievements of the western civilization! At the very least a debt of gratitude is owed as well as a genuine appreciation for the excellence of Muslim scholarship!

In seeking common ground I have found that both Christians and Muslims aspire to earthly gains; material wealth and children. Yet through this desire, both are likely to fall away from righteousness. “And it is not your wealth nor your children that bring you near to Us in

rank; but whoever does good, for such is a double reward for what they do, and they are secure in the highest places,” (Holy Qur’an, 34:37). Likewise, Jesus told his disciples, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,” (Matthew 6:19).

So why are we both intent upon ignoring these verses and persist in the quest for material wealth? Perhaps this question is best answered by Mirza Tahir Ahmad, who in his book “Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge, and Truth”, states that “man by nature is not a moral animal,” (p 55).

Our common failing is in not giving sufficient importance to the acknowledgement of the sinfulness within us or the evil around us which will have its effects upon us unless we strive with dedication against it. And the best weapon with which to defeat evil is love.

The ‘us versus them’ mentality that seems to infect both faiths certainly has no basis in any Holy Scripture. And if we look closely both at the Holy Qur’an and the Holy Bible, it is quite the contrary. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” (Deuteronomy 6:5) This is the core principle of Christianity, which is again reiterated by Jesus. (Matthew 22:37-39). The Holy Qur’an confirms the validity of this Mosaic scripture: “Once again, We gave Moses the Scripture, perfecting [Our favor] for those who do good, explaining everything clearly, as guidance and mercy, so that they might believe in the meeting with their Lord. This too is a blessed Scripture, which We have sent down—follow it and be conscious of your Lord, so that you may receive mercy...,” (Holy Qur’an, 6:154).

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community proclaims, “Love for all, hatred for none.” Likewise, Jesus also proclaimed, “Love your enemies...do good to them that hate you, pray for them that...persecute you.” (Matthew 5:44) What does it mean, then, to hate none or to love one’s enemies? First of all it means listening to them, not as insincere acquaintances, but as dear friends; it means encouraging them, not disparaging them; guiding them to come closer to God, not undermining whatever steps they may have taken in that direction; and also learning from them. “Let us look at our own faults, and not at other persons. People who are extremely correct themselves are often shocked at everything they see; however, we might often learn a great deal that is essential from the very per-

sons we censure,” (The Interior Castle, St. Theresa of Avila).

That these virtues are not whole-heartedly practiced is evidenced by the lack of meaningful dialogue between Muslims and Christians. If both Christians and Muslims practice what they preach, then we will progress toward love and understanding between the communities, which is vital to our mutual success in fighting evil in this world. “The devil’s wiles are many: he would turn hell upside-down a thousand times to make us think ourselves better than we are. He has good reason for it, for such fancies are most injurious: sham virtues springing from this root are always accompanied by a vain glory never found in those of Divine origin, which are free from pride,” (The Interior Castle, St. Theresa of Avila).

The first time I read “The Meaning of the Glorious Qur’an” by Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall in 1976, I really didn’t get it. But then I really didn’t get much of the Bible either until I began to behave in a more righteous manner. I found that the more my actions were in accord with God’s Word, the better my understanding of that Word. There is no logic to explain this; but then logic can’t explain everything. It can’t explain what happened to me when I happened upon a verse in the Holy Qur’an about Mary, mother of Jesus: “And when the angels said: O Mary surely Allah has chosen thee and purified thee and chosen thee above the women of the world,” (Holy Qur’an, 3:42). Something compelled me to learn this verse in Arabic and Mr. Abdul Ahad Choudry from the Baitul Hameed Mosque in Chino, California was kind to help me. As a Protestant Christian, I had never been taught much about Mary and this verse opened my eyes to her and I thank God for it.

There is also something quite intriguing about this verse regarding Mary. Note that it is the 42nd verse of the third chapter of the Holy Qur’an. And when I looked at the New Testament, the 42nd verse of the 3rd book, Luke, says “In a loud voice she (Elizabeth, Mary’s cousin) exclaimed: Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!” It could of course be a mere coincidence that the 42nd verse of the third chapter and the 42nd verse of the third book in the New Testament, proclaim Mary to be very special in relation to all the women of the world. But then it could also be a very concrete sign of a common ground for Christians and Muslims. May the love for Mary be one of the many commonalities, which will unite

us and strengthen our faith and devotion to the Almighty God.

Sometimes people have experiences which lead them to a profound truth. For me it was when I was reading a passage in the Holy Bible and suddenly my eyes were opened to the idea of submission to God; I then began to appreciate for the first time, the experiences of my Muslim brothers. This passage speaks of Hagirah, the mother of Ishmael and also the true mother of all of the descendants of Ishmael. Here is how it begins: “So Sarai, Abram’s wife, brought her slave girl Hagirah, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram as wife...and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. And Sarai said to Abram, ‘May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my maid to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the Lord judge between thou and me!’ But Abram said to Sarai, ‘Behold, your maid is in your power, do to her as you please.’ Then Sarai dealt harshly with her and she fled from her.” (Genesis 16:3-6).

And this is the part that opened my eyes. Even now I feel something strange but special, just writing about it: “The angel of the Lord found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. And he said, ‘Hagirah, maid of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?’ She said, ‘I am fleeing from my mistress Sarai.’ The angel of the Lord said to her, ‘Return to your mistress, and submit to her. Behold, you are with child and shall bear a son: you shall call his name Ishmael, (God hears, in Hebrew) because the Lord has given heed to your affliction...’. So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, ‘Thou art a God of seeing’ for she said, ‘Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?’ Therefore the well was called Beerlahairoi (the well of one who sees and lives). It lies between Kadesh and Bered,” (Genesis 16:7-14). Now if your first inclination is to say that she didn’t see God but rather an angel and that this shows how erroneous the Bible really is, then I have failed to make my point clear. And it is that we must begin our dialogue with love, not suspicion, in our hearts. It took me years to actually get it. I must have read this a hundred times and it never hit me. What I’m trying to give you is a shortcut to the truth. And that is love. Read with love in your heart and you will get the message. Humility won’t hurt either!

“Minds are diverse and heterogeneous,

each is of its own kind; but from this diversity should rise harmony in praise of God, and diversity should no longer imply enmity.” (Peter Abelard c. 1115) This could well have been spoken by George

Washington or any of the founding fathers of America, who not only appreciated diversity, but were in fact passionate advocates that every man had the right to religious freedom. Washington even discouraged the use of profanity on the battlefield as ‘an affront to Almighty God’. Where have we come since then?

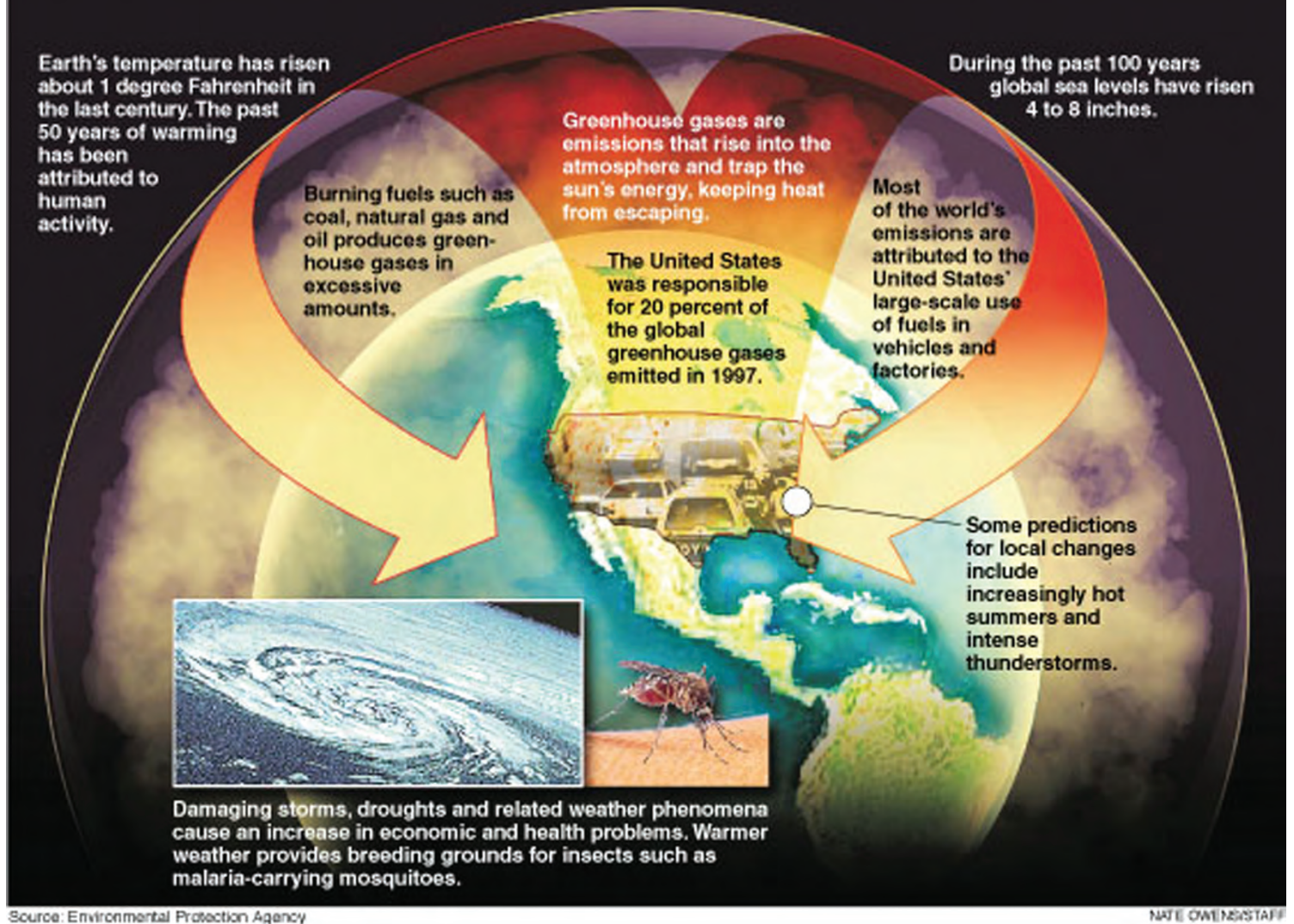
The Ahmadiyya tenet of loyalty to one’s country requires, in the case of America, an appreciation for the beliefs of the founding fathers. But true loyalty also means striving to bring all people closer to God and this requires engagement; showing people how they can be more faithful to their own convictions, while also demonstrating an exemplary behavior, which ought command the respect and appreciation of their fellow citizens. The America of today would doubtless be a disappointment to the founding fathers in many respects. If we strive at least to make America true to the founding principles, then we are truly loyal to what America was meant to be.

A common belief is that the intentions of Allah can not be corrupted. And I’m sure we can all agree that the purpose of Allah can not be thwarted by the intellect of man. If it is Allah’s purpose to give guidance and light, then no man can alter that course. “We sent Jesus, Son of Mary, in their footsteps, to confirm the Torah that had been sent before him. We gave him the Gospel which contained guidance and light, fulfilling that which was revealed before it in the Torah and a guidance and an admonition for the righteous. Let the People of the Gospel judge according to that which Allah has revealed therein, and who so judges not by that which Allah has revealed, these it is who are the transgressors,” (Holy Qur’an, 5:46). Should we argue against the validity of the Christian scriptures?

The perfect Christian will be the dearest friend of the Muslim, if we all follow the guidance which Allah has given us.

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Global warming: Causes and effects



Global Warming and its Effect on Islamic Countries

Amtul Mussawir Mansoor

“Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of the work that the hands of men have wrought, that He may make them taste the fruit of some of their doings, so that they may turn back from evil.”
(Al-Rum: 42)

One of the challenges confronting mankind this century is global warming. Many have heard the term global warming but what does it really mean? Global warming is the gradual warming of the lower layers of the Earth's lower atmosphere caused by the slowly increasing concentrations of man-made greenhouse gases (“GHG”), primarily carbon dioxide and methane. The GHG, which are produced by the burning of fossil fuels, mainly petroleum and coal, trap infrared radiation, preventing the earth to cool down. The consequences of global warming are predicted

be devastating. In fact a rise of just one degree would melt the Greenland ice sheet and drown the Maldives, but a three degree increase would kill the Amazon rainforest, wipe out nearly half of all species facing extinction, and wreak havoc with crop yields. Global warming will also boost outbreaks of infectious diseases, worsen shortages of water and food in vulnerable countries and create an army of climate refugees fleeing uninhabitable regions.¹

In Islamic countries, the energy sector is the largest source of GHG emission. Energy sector includes companies involved in the exploration and development of oil or gas re-

serves and oil and gas drilling. Agriculture is the second largest source of GHG emitters, varying from one Muslim country to another. Another factor that enhances global warming is the urbanization of the Muslim countries. For instance, urban areas are the major sources of anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions from the burning of fossil fuels for heating and cooling, industrial processes, to transportation of people and goods, and construction of buildings and roads. Among the Islamic countries, Qatar has the highest level of gas emissions.²

Islam prohibits waste, destruction and pollution and guides Muslims to respect their environment. Therefore, Muslims should make it a duty upon himself to protect God's creation. God Almighty elaborates, *"And create not disorder in the earth after it has been set in order, and call upon Him in fear and hope. Surely, the mercy of Allah is nigh unto those who do good"* (Al-A'raf: 57). He further advises us, *"O children of Adam! look to your adornment at every time and place of worship, and eat and drink but exceed not the bounds; surely, He does not love those who exceed the bounds"* (Al-A'raf: 32).

An important consequence of global warming is water shortage. Water makes up 70% of the human body's chemical composition. It is therefore a resource without which we cannot exist. By the middle of the 21st century, water availability is projected to temporarily increase in higher latitudes and in certain wet tropical regions, due to melting of mountain glaciers, and decrease in drier parts of the tropics and subtropics, especially during the summer period. This means that the dry regions of the world will get even drier and will suffer severe droughts, especially the Middle East. The water quality will also be negatively affected by heavy precipitation events which may contaminate drinking water supplies.³

Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} had foreseen this and said, *"Excess in the use of water is forbidden, even if you have the resource of a whole river"* (Tirmidhi). He further said, *"Muslims share alike in three things — water, herb- age and fire"* (Mishkat al Masabih).

According to Francesca De Chatel, a Netherlands-based anthropologist:

"One could say he (Muhammad^{saw}) was an environmentalist before his time, a pioneer in the domain of conservation, sustain-

able development, and resource management, and one who constantly sought to maintain a harmonious balance between man and nature."



She further says: *"And a closer reading of the Hadith, the body of works that recounts significant events in Muhammad's^{saw} life, reveals that he was a staunch advocate of environmental protection."*⁴

The earliest initiative for environmental protection was the first "World Conference on the Environment", was held in Stockholm, in 1972. On the other hand, Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} had given guidance on environment protection 1,400 years ago!

Holy Muhammad^{saw} advocated the sustainable use of land and recognized that it should not be overexploited or abused.

De Chatel elaborates: *"In order to protect land, forests and wildlife, the Prophet Muhammad^{saw} created inviolable zones known as hima and haram, in which resources were to be left untouched. Both are still in use today: haram areas are often drawn up around wells and water sources to protect the groundwater table from over-pumping. Hima applies particularly to wildlife and forestry and usually designates an area of land where grazing and woodcutting are restricted, or where certain animal species are protected."*

The Prophet Muhammad^{saw} not only encouraged the sustainable use of fertile lands, he also told his followers of the benefits of making unused land productive: planting a tree, sowing a seed and irrigating dry land

were all regarded as charitable deeds. *"Whoever brings dead land to life, that is, cultivates wasteland, for him is a reward therein."*⁴

Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} has given such beautiful teachings about protection of environment to the Muslims that it would be unfortunate if they did not act upon them. Islam promotes harmony by advising moderation. In the Holy Quran, God Almighty says, *"And those who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly but moderate between the two"* (Al-Furqan: 68).

Islamic countries should act upon the Quranic injunctions and the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} not only for the sake of the planet but also for the pleasure of God Almighty. Instead of exploiting lands for profit, they should take collective action and preserve the environment. The United Arab Emirates are taking action to reduce its footprint. Abu Dhabi announced "Masdar", which is going to be the world's greenest city. Once ready, it will be a carbon neutral place where no cars will be allowed. They are also in the process of making new laws, which look at reducing water usage, improving power consumption required for cooling properties in the hot summers.⁵

May God Almighty guide not only the Islamic countries but the entire world to take heed of the injunctions given by the Holy Quran and Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw}, and save this planet from impending disaster? Amen.

Endnotes

¹ http://www.weatherquestions.com/What_is_global_warming.htm

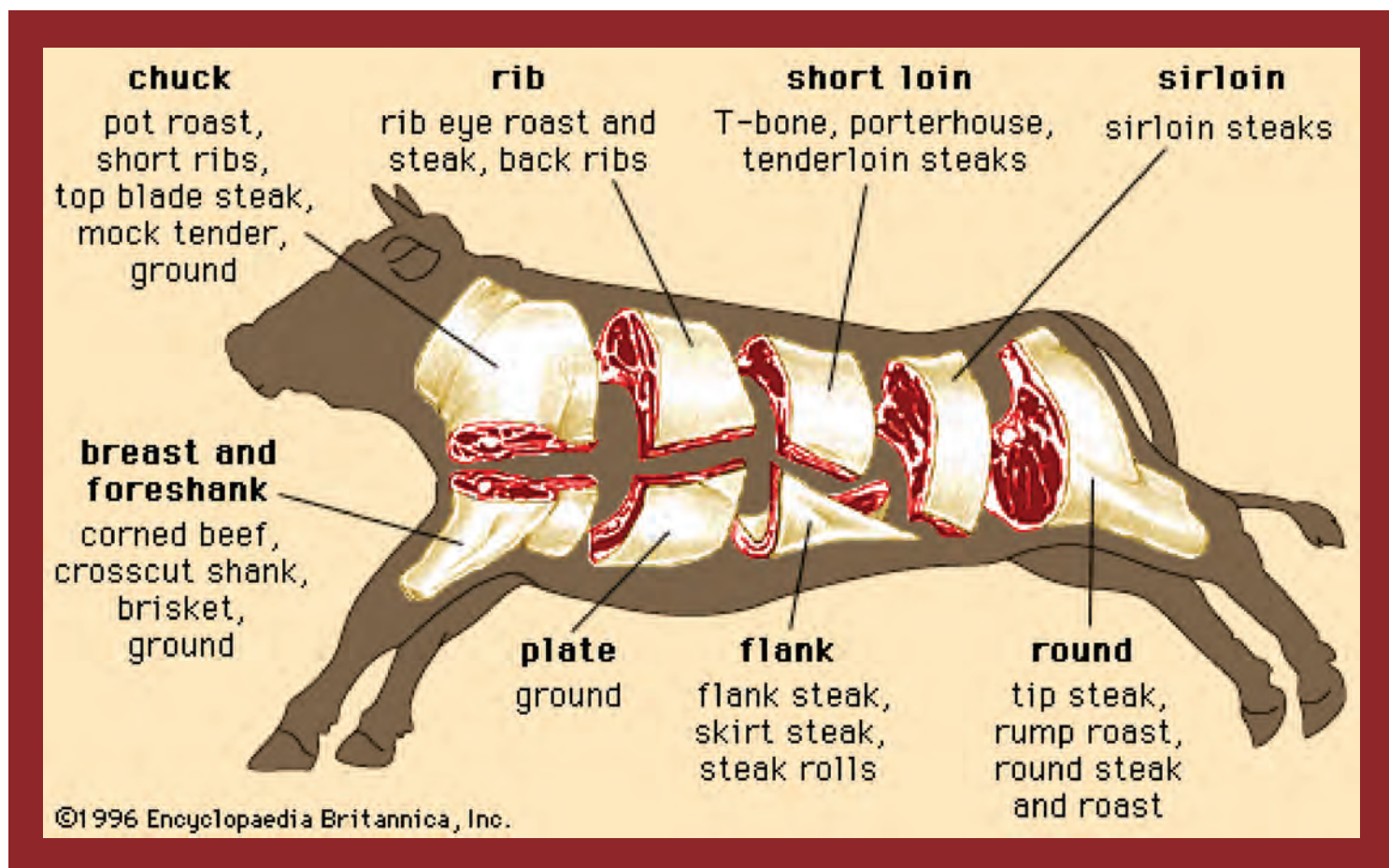
² Matouq, Mohammed. "Predicting the impact of global warming on the Middle East region: Case study on the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan." *Journal of Applied Sciences*. 8.3 (2008): 462-470.

³ <http://www.tropical-rainforest-animals.com/Global-Warming-Effects.html>

⁴ <http://www.scribd.com/doc/33072624/ISLAM-Solution-to-Climate-Change-Global-Warming>

⁵ <http://www.ameinfo.com/148002.html>

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The American Meat Industry: A Modern Muslim Dilemma

By Ronald Abdul Rahim Hubbs

It is no secret that Americans love eating meat. They prove it every year by consuming nearly 200 pounds of meat per person (USDA.gov). In 2007, US meat and poultry sales reached a staggering 91.5 billion pounds.

There's certainly nothing un-Islamic about consuming meat, as the Holy Qur'an clearly states, "*And of the cattle He has created some for burden and some for slaughter. Eat of that which Allah has provided for you...*" (6:143). The Prophet Muhammad^{sa} himself was known to particularly like roasted lamb, the front shoulder being his preferred cut. Likewise, Hadhrat Ibrahim^{as} not only offered his angelic guests a fatted calf for a feast, but also commemorated his obedience and sacrifice to Allah with the slaughtering of a ram, which is of course emu-

lated every year by millions of Muslims the world over during *Eid al-Adha* (literally, 'Festival of Sacrifice').

While meat consumption itself is perfectly allowed and even meritorious, there are some details which must be taken into account when consuming meat. The Quranic verse 6:143 mentioned above is actually only *part* of the whole verse and commandment. The second half of the verse curiously reads,

"... and follow not the footsteps of Satan. Surely, he is to you an open foe."

There is a deep significance as to why Allah, in His Perfect Knowledge and Wisdom, has mentioned such a warning in connection with both eating and cattle. The Muslims of today must seriously contemplate the possible ways that harmful or evil innovations have crept into

the raising, slaughter and consumption of meat, lest we be affected by the negative consequences thereof.

The Holy Qur'an gives clear advice and openly commands that meat from certain animals not be eaten:

That which "dies of itself" (2:174)

That containing blood (2:174)

Swine / pork (2:174)

That sacrificed in the name of any other than Allah (2:174) or upon an alter (to false gods / idols) (5:4)

That which is beaten to death, dies due to a blow, or dies due to a fall (5:4)

That which is gored to death (5:4)

Meat fitting these forbidden (*haram*) degrees is harmful on various physical and spiritual levels. It should be noted that these different forbidden criteria mainly pertain to blood

and its filth. Blood contains many pathogenic factors and if not properly slaughtered, dead blood remains in the tissues and contaminates the meat. Pigs, by their very nature, are known to eat all manner of filth, including carrion and animals containing blood.

Another level of guidance expressed in the Holy Qur'an reads, "*O Ye men, eat of what is lawful and good (tayib) in the earth; and follow not the footsteps of Satan; Surely, he is to you an open enemy. He only enjoins upon you what is evil and what is foul, and that you say of Allah what you do not know.*" (2:169-170)

In this passage, Allah adds an additional qualifier. In addition to being lawful (*halal*), our food should also be *tayib*. The Five Volume Commentary of the Holy Qur'an published under Khalifat-ul-Masih II elaborates upon this concept:

"...as food plays an important part in the formation of a man's character, regulations concerning it are mentioned first. According to Islam all food should be: 1) Halal - allowed by the Law; 2) it should also be ***tayib* - good, pure, wholesome and agreeable. Under the second condition, sometimes even lawful things become forbidden.**" ...

"The prohibition against following Satan, coming immediately after the commandment with respect to food, alludes to the influence which physical actions exercise on the moral and spiritual conditions of man. The use of unlawful and unwholesome food tends to impair our moral and spiritual faculties, while lawful and wholesome food improves our morals and helps the development of our spiritual powers."

Further, the Short Quranic Commentary published under Khalifat-ul-Masih IV renders the following notation:

Note #197: "The injunction contained in the words, "eat of good, pure and wholesome things (*Tayyibat*) indicates that Muslims are not allowed to use things which may, in any way, injure their physical or moral or spiritual health, though they may be allowed by the Shari'ah."

The Prophet Muhammad's^{saw} Example...

"...He enjoins on them what is good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful for them the good things and forbids them the bad..." Qur'an 7:158

In perfect practice of both the spirit and letter of the Holy Qur'an, the Holy Prophet

Muhammad^{saw} gave a perfect example regarding the handling of animals and eating of meat. He taught that the commandments to act kindly and justly to humankind extend to animals. He was very particular regarding the treatment of animals, demanding that they be treated with compassion. He was known to have never struck an animal and gave adamant instructions that they should not be overloaded nor overworked, but instead properly watered, fed, and rested. Prophet Muhammad^{saw} even once rebuked his followers for taking the young from a bird's nest as it put the mother bird in great distress. He commanded them, "Who has hurt the feelings of this bird by taking its young? Return them to her." (Muslim)

Regarding the slaughter of animals the Prophet^{saw} instructed, "...when you slaughter an animal, you should use the best method and sharpen your knife so as to cause the animal as little pain as possible." (Muslim). Even further, he once stated to a man who was sharpening his knife in front of the animal to be slaughtered, "Do you intend on inflicting death on the animal twice - once by sharpening the knife within its sight, and once by cutting its throat?" (Al-Furu Min-al-Kafi Lil-Kulini).

Some other instructive *ahadith* regarding the treatment of animals:

"A good deed done to a beast is as good as doing good to a human being; while an act of cruelty to a beast is as bad as an act of cruelty to human beings" (Bukhari)

Upon seeing an ass branded upon the face, the Prophet^{saw} said, "God curse the one who branded it." (Muslim)

For handling her camel roughly, the Prophet^{sa} instructed Hadhrat Aisha^{ra}: "It behooves you to treat the animals gently." (Muslim)

The State of Animals being raised, slaughtered and consumed in the United States ...

For those who have travelled the I-5 freeway in California between LA and the Bay Area, they can tell you about the experience of driving past the Harris "Ranch." About midway through the journey, one begins to see - and smell - a huge concentration of cows standing in their own filth. The smell is not just unpleasant, it is beyond repul-

sive. For miles, the flies and malodor permeate the air like a thick blanket. If you stop for gas within this several mile stretch, your car will literally fill up with flies the moment you open the door. Far from being a ranch, *this* is a feedlot.

Conditions on feedlots are harrowing: No grass, but instead feces and filth everywhere. Sick, bloated, and drugged cows. It's like a cow concentration camp. In just a few months on the feedlot, cattle are fattened by up to 400 pounds. This occurs from a cocktail of growth hormone injections and genetically modified soy and corn feed which is laced with antibiotics and sometimes mixed with "by-product feedstuffs," which can include french fries, potato chips, bakery waste and even candy. ("By-Product Feedstuffs in Dairy Cattle Diets in the Upper Midwest," College of Agriculture & Life Sciences, University of Wisconsin at Madison. 2008)

Such unnatural diets, unlike the grass that cows evolved on, create a condition called "sub-acute acidosis." This condition, considered 'normal' for feedlot cattle, describes intestinal inflammation and causes the animals to develop gas, bloating and pain. Consequently, this leads to bacteremia (bacteria in the blood) and eventual liver abscess - yet, the answer on the feedlot is not to graze the cows on grass to recover, but instead to lace their feed with powerful antibiotics, thus complicating an already bad situation. Out of the 30 million pounds of antibiotics used in the United States each year, 25 million pounds are used in factory farmed animal feed, to both fatten them up and as an attempt to keep chronic infections at bay.

The combination of tainted, unnatural feed and inflammation causes various deficiencies and subsequent diseases. But this is just one part of the problem. The New York Times (1/27/08) reports that US livestock produces about 900 million tons of waste annually. Run-off from the feedlots contaminates groundwater for miles and creates mountains of chemically and hormonally contaminated fecal matter. If this was waste from healthy animals eating grass and natural rudiments and spread out over farms and fields, it would be a good thing. But it is not. This is concentrated waste from diseased and drugged animals. While manure from healthy cows acts as perfect fertilizer, manure from the feedlots has been increasingly

linked with outbreaks of infection over the past several years. The run off from such feedlots makes its way into waterways and sewage treatment plants, thus further poisoning our stressed water supplies with dangerous bacteria and enormous amounts of pharmaceutical residues.

Meat from feedlot animals exhibits substantial differences in nutritional quality as well. Free-range, grass-fed beef has considerably less saturated fat and much increased Vitamin E levels as compared to corn-stuffed feedlot cattle. And although feedlot promoters claim that no significant hormone or drug residues remain in the milk or meat of their cattle, the European Union has banned all US beef imports because of hormone use. Seeming to support the EU ban, an August report in the journal *Pediatrics* has shown that breast development and puberty in girls is occurring at alarmingly young ages, some girls having menses as young as 6 or 7 years old. Such manipulative production methods are now proving to be linked to current trends in hormonal disturbance and obesity.

In addition, the methods of slaughter raise great concern as well. The common practice in slaughter houses uses a captive bolt gun to “stun” cattle before slaughter. Far more than ‘stunning’ the cows, bolt guns fire a blank cartridge which punches a metal rod through the skull bone of the animal, effectively concussing and damaging the brain. Current advocates against ‘stunning’ warn that this process releases brain matter into the blood, which can then contaminate tissues with viral and prion diseases such as Mad Cow disease. This process clearly violates the Quranic injunction against eating an animal’s meat after its having been killed by a blow.

Poultry

Modern factory poultry farming is probably one of the most hideous and inhumane spectacles observable today. From the start, chicks have the tips of their beaks snipped off - a painful and humiliating ordeal for the delicate creatures. This is done due to the fact that the unimaginably cramped and disgusting conditions in which they live promote aggression and pecking at each other. Conditions in the warehouses are filthy and diseased, with each chicken getting about a half of a square foot of space. On an ongoing basis the warehouses are littered with

both dead and diseased chickens that cannot walk.

Thousands of birds are housed in giant sheds, which are not cleaned except between ‘batches’ - thus, the floor is constantly covered in excrement and ammonia. Many of the birds are diseased and cannot walk due to having been genetically manipulated and artificially fed to reach unnatural sizes at accelerated rates. Some businessmen look at this as progress, ignoring the grim reality of the chicken’s health and miserable existence.

Rounding the chickens up for slaughter is yet another brutal ordeal. Workers throw and stuff chickens into tiny transport cages often breaking their wings or even killing them. Transported in filth and extreme weather conditions, many die in route. Once at the mechanical slaughterhouses their necks can be wrung, heads decapitated, or they can even wind up in the boilers still alive (all clear violations of Quranic slaughter injunctions).

Direct Consequences

The consequences of factory farming are now becoming apparent. MRSE antibiotic-resistant ‘superbugs’ have spread from animals to humans. Waterways and soil are contaminated on multiple levels - bacterially, hormonally, and chemically. According to the CDC, bacteria such as salmonella and E. Coli, cause food poisoning in 76 million people in the US annually, resulting in 5,000 deaths. Diseased animal food accounts for 80% of salmonellosis in humans, or 1.4 million cases per year.

Indirect Consequences

Are we to think that the powerful estrogenic hormones used to fatten up 1/2 ton cows plus the intense fear and stress hormones constantly present in feedlot animals somehow don’t affect the humans who consume them? To the contrary, obesity and hormonal disruption in both children and adults has steadily climbed to epidemic levels. Obesity itself is causal to several serious chronic diseases, including diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Low grade, chronic fungal infections and intestinal dysbiosis from antibiotics and their residues now affect huge and growing percentages of Americans. While all of these problems can’t be completely blamed on

modern factory farming alone, it would be insensible to ignore the obvious connections.

Aside from these grave physical concerns, how is eating meat from such tortured and chemically compromised animals affecting our emotional and spiritual senses? Consider the powerful effect of hormones, which strongly alter mood and desire, excite intense passions, and can even lead people to intense rage and murder. It should be apparent that eating such contaminated meat can cloud the senses and judgment and is, therefore, playing with spiritual fire.

Most people do not want to ponder such issues when picking up a burger, but the consequences are real and get more serious all the time. The Holy Qur’an has clearly warned of these subtle yet serious consequences. The Perfect Book’s instructions regarding food and eating, and especially meat, are nearly always coupled with warnings regarding the machinations of Satan. If we think about the characteristics of the factory farm system, they are indeed the hallmarks of Satan: filth, overcrowding, mistreatment and abuse, brutality, artificial and unnatural drugged states, improper slaughter, violence, greed, fear and terror. To pretend that the net effect of this system does not affect us is both naive and self-destructive.

Solutions and Alternatives

In the end, we are responsible for what we choose to put in our stomachs. By Allah’s Grace, there has been a free-range, natural farming counter-movement taking place in America for the past several decades. Many farmers and ranchers, for both ethical and financial reasons, have moved away from the factory farm model. Considering all that is at stake, it has become essential for Muslims to consume truly *halal* and *tayib* meat and to support such responsible and healthy meat production.

May Allah protect us from Satan the accursed.

The writer is a convert to Islam. He holds a Master’s Degree in Oriental Medicine and Acupuncture and a Bachelor’s in Holistic Health Science. He is a Licensed Acupuncturist and practices in Southern California. As a part of his practice, he spends considerable time explaining and prescribing dietary advice to patients as a necessary part of their healing process.

Nature's spiritual lessons: Metaphors that guide us to higher spirituality



By Zia H Shah MD

Human knowledge is a collection of metaphors. Their correct application is the foundation of human wisdom that in addition to human language, distinguishes them from the other apes. Even the celebrated field of mathematics is a metaphor and no more and it is an amazing coincidence that the mathematical metaphors perfectly apply to nature.

According to Albert Einstein, “The most incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible.” The authority of the idea, all knowledge being metaphor only, is not only rooted

in authority of celebrated intellectuals but also the word of God, as Allah says:

“Indeed, We (Allah) have set forth to men all kinds of metaphors in this Qur’an that they may take heed,” (Al Qur’an 39:28). And again, “And surely, We have set forth for mankind in various ways all kinds of similitude (metaphor) in this Qur’an, but most men would reject everything but disbelief.” (Al Qur’an 17:90)

A wonderful metaphor mentioned in the Holy Qur’an to encourage men to become charitable is that of a corn cob. The Holy Qur’an states:

“The similitude of those who spend their wealth for the cause of Allah is like the similitude of a grain of corn which grows seven ears, in each ear a hundred grains.

And Allah multiplies it further for whomsoever He pleases; and Allah is Bountiful, All-Knowing,” (Al Qur’an 2:262).

The metaphor of the cob allows for a 700 fold multiplication, but there are additional metaphors that suggest even greater Providence of the Gracious God, as is suggested by the clause, ‘And Allah multiplies it further for whomsoever He pleases.’

A metaphor that brings the unlimited treasures of God and His generosity in focus is one that could not be understood by any seventh century man. Yet the word of the All-Knowing has recorded:

“And the heaven We built with our own powers and indeed We go on

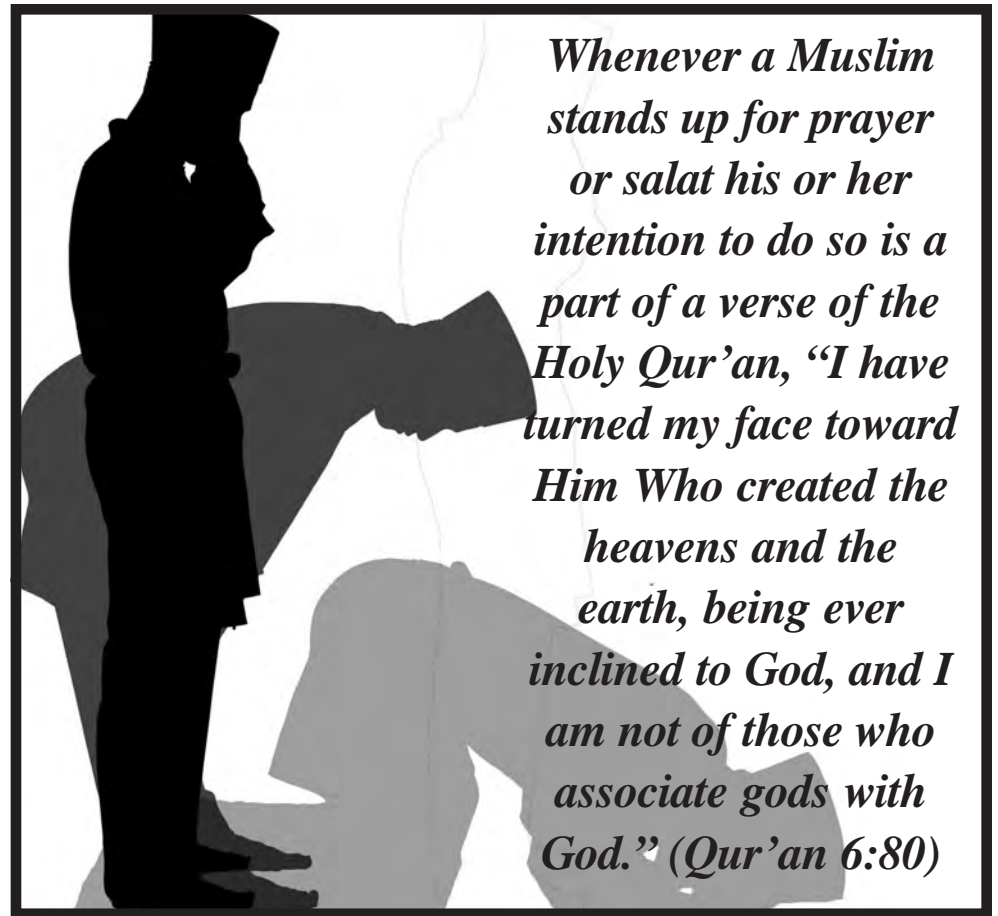
expanding it.” (Al Quran 51:48). It was only after Edwin Hubble’s theory of the expansion of the universe that the full import of this wonderful verse could be appreciated. Allah’s treasures are infinite and in retrospect a believer can easily read this in a famous *hadith* (saying), of Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings be on him:

“O My servants, if the first of you and the last of you, and the whole lot of you, high and low, were to assemble in one large plain and were to beg Me for whatever they desire and I were to bestow upon each of you all that you had asked for, that would not detract from My treasures any more than a needle would detract from the ocean by being immersed in it.”

Whenever a Muslim stands up for prayer or *salat* his or her intention to do so is a part of a verse of the Holy Qur’an, “I have turned my face toward Him Who created the heavens and the earth, being ever inclined to God, and I am not of those who associate gods with God.” (Al Qur’an 6:80) So, the fact that Allah is the Creator of this universe is a very basic, almost axiomatic or self evident understanding of every Muslim. *Hadhrat* Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah who was the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community said, “Examine the earth and the heavens and whatever you can see in them. Is it possible that such elaborate infrastructure could be maintained without the hidden hand of God? No, certainly not, Not at all! The Holy Qur’an builds on this basic belief as it argues from the tangible and material to the intangible and spiritual, it makes the study of the physical a guide and foundation for the believer’s moral and spiritual development. For example, note in the chapter that is often recited in the Friday prayers, the invitation of study of nature smoothly transitions to moral principles of propagation and religious freedom and then to the spiritual understanding of accountability to God in the hereafter:

“Do they not then look at the camel, how it is created? And at the heaven, how it is raised high? And at the mountains, how they are set up? And at the earth, how it is spread out?

“Admonish, therefore, for thou art but an admonisher; Thou hast no authority



to *compel* them.

“But whoever turns away and disbelieves, Allah will punish him with the greatest punishment. Unto Us surely is their return. Then, surely, it is for Us to call them to account.” (Al Qur’an 88:18-27).

And again in the following verses the subject moves from the tangible and physical to intangible and spiritual:

“In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day there are indeed Signs for men of understanding; Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and *lying* on their sides, and ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth: ‘Our Lord, Thou hast not created this in vain; *nay*, Holy art Thou; save us, then, from the punishment of the Fire.’” (Al Quran 3:191-192)

Ex President of the UN General Assembly, Sir Zafrullah Khan wrote in his book *Islam: its meaning for Modern man*:

“Not only did the universe not just happen of itself, but it was created with a purpose. It is inconsistent with the

Godhead that He should bring into being anything merely by way of sport or pastime. ‘We created not the heaven and the earth and all that is between the two in play. If We had wished to find a pastime We would surely have found it in what is with Us, if at all We were to do such a thing’ (21:17-18). Indeed, to imagine that God does anything without purpose, in effect amounts to a denial of God (38:28). All God’s attributes operate in accordance with the requirements of wisdom (15:86; 39:6; 46:4).

The whole of God’s creation is in harmony. There is no discord, disorder, or incongruity. Everything is adjusted and coordinated so as to completely fulfill the purpose for which it was created (67:2-5). Such disorder or maladjustment as may be observed results from misuse or contravention of the laws governing the universe.

The purpose of man’s creation is that he should receive the impress of God’s attributes and should become a manifestation of them within the limits of his capacities. In other words, he should *become* God’s image (51:57). The Prophet

has explained this by saying: ‘Equip yourselves with the attributes of God.’”

As we reflect on the different laws of nature we are impressed by the attribute “Al Rahman” of God. This attribute implies that God provides for man even before he supplicates for his needs. Talking about this attribute, the Promised Messiah has said:

“The revelation of the Holy Word of Allah and its communication to mankind is by virtue of the Divine attribute of Rahmaniyyat. It is characteristic of Rahmaniyyat that it is manifested on account of pure Divine grace and beneficence, without any reference to any preceding human effort. For instance, the sun, the moon, water, air, have all been created for the benefit of mankind by virtue of the Divine attribute of Rahmaniyyat and no one can claim that they have been created in consequence of any action or effort on his part.”

With the study of laws of nature man has come to know of countless provisions that have made our universe suitable for life or biophyllic. This has been covered in several recent books. For example, *Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape The Universe*, by Martin J. Rees and *The Goldilocks Enigma: Why Is the Universe Just Right for Life?* a book by Paul Davies. Some aspects of the story are discussed in a Google Knol titled, *A challenge for Dawkins: Where did carbon come from?*

To explain away the extraordinary Providence that science is now revealing, scientists with preconceived commitment to atheism are pushing the idea of a multiverse. In a recent book *The Grand Design*, Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow suggest that the M theory allows for 10^{500} different universes, each with its own laws. Now any universe outside our own by its very definition cannot be observed, so the multiverse theory lies outside the realm of science, but paraphrasing Hawking’s number of possible universes, there may be 10^{500} variables that make our universe biophyllic. What the atheists may consider fortunate coincidences or serendipitous happenings for those who are not obsessed with the atheistic paradigm; these are 10^{500} providences and so many reasons to be thankful to our Creator. Allah says in the Holy Qur’an, “If you *try to* count the favors of

Allah, you will not be able to number them. Indeed, man is very unjust, very ungrateful,” (Al Qur’an 14:35).

Additional issues pertaining to the multiverse are examined in a Google Knol by the author.

Epilogue

In the study of nature it is paramount to note that Allah works through hidden means and laws of nature. But He is not a Deist God, who created the universe and now has nothing to do with it. On the contrary, He is a Personal God, who is ever inclined to listen to human prayers and is keenly involved in human affairs.

How can our study of nature help us in our personal life? In the words of the Promised Messiah may peace be on him, “Man has, therefore, been reminded that his God is the Lord and Providence of the Universe, so that the horizon of his hopes may be extended and he may believe that God, the Supreme, has immense beneficial powers and that He can bring into being an extensive variety of means for his benefit.”

If we inculcate this behavior when we travel around and study developments in the study of the laws of nature, then we will God willing become heirs to the following vision of the Promised Messiah may blessings of Allah be on him:

“Our paradise is in our God. Our highest delight is in our God for we have seen Him and have found every beauty in Him. This wealth is worth procuring though one may have to lay down one’s life to procure it. This ruby is worth purchasing though one may have to lose one’s self to acquire it. O ye, who are bereft, run to this fountain and it will satiate your thirst. It is the fountain of life that will save you. What shall I do, and by what drum shall I make the announcement that this is your God, so that people might hear? What remedy shall I apply to their ears so that they should listen? If you belong to Allah, rest assured that Allah will indeed belong to you.”

Endnotes:

¹ Al Quran 6:104.

² Al Quran 27:45.

³ Al Quran 38:33.

⁴ J Boslough. Stephen Hawking’s universe. William Morrow, New York, 1985. Page 121.

⁵ Edward Robert Harrison. Masks of the Universe: Changing Ideas on the Nature of the

Cosmos. Cambridge University Press, 2003. Page 108.

⁶ Roger Ariew and Eric Watkins. Readings in Modern Philosophy. Hackett Publishing, 2000. Page 299.

⁷ Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow. The Grand Design. Bantam Books, New York, 2010. Page 165.

⁸ Al Quran 27: 63.

⁹ John Rees. Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape the Universe. Basic Books, 2000. Page 4.

¹⁰ John Rees. Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape the Universe. Basic Books, 2000. Page 4.

¹¹ John Rees. Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape the Universe. Basic Books, 2000. Page 165-166.

¹² Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow. The Grand Design. Bantam Books, New York, 2010. Page 162-163.

¹³ Antony Flew. There Is a God: How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind. Harper One, 2007. Page 115.

¹⁴ Paul Davies, “Universes Galore: Where Will It All End?” <http://cosmos.asu.edu/publications/chapters/Universes%20galore.pdf>

¹⁵ Richard Swinburne, “Design Defended,” Think (Spring 2004): page 17.

¹⁶ John Rees. Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape the Universe. Basic Books, 2000. Page 166-167.

¹⁷ John Rees. Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape the Universe. Basic Books, 2000. Page 168.

¹⁸ “string theory.” Encyclopædia Britannica. 2010. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 08 Dec. 2010 <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/574576/string-theory>>.

¹⁹ Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow. The Grand Design. Bantam Books, New York, 2010. Pages 178.

²⁰ Kenneth R Miller. Finding Darwin’s God. Cliff Street Books (Harper Collins), paper back edition 2000, p. 253.

²¹ Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow. The Grand Design. Bantam Books, New York, 2010. Page 87.

²² Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow. The Grand Design. Bantam Books, New York, 2010. Page 123, 149 and 163.

²³ Al Quran 1:2. Al Quran 59:25.

Zia Shah is a doctor practicing in sleep and lung disorders in upstate New York. He is also the editor of the Alislam magazine, an international publication of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

Sayings of the Holy Prophet^{saw} as recorded in Sahih Bukhari:

Book of Agriculture, Hadith 513:

Narrated Anas bin Malik:

Allah's Apostle said, "There is none amongst the Muslims who plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, a person or an animal eats from it, but it is regarded as a charitable gift for him."

Book of Water Distribution, Hadith 543:

Narrated Abu Huraira:

Allah's Apostle said, "Do not withhold excess water supplies, for that will prevent people from grazing their cattle."

Hadith 553:

Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Umar:

Allah's Apostle said, "A woman was tortured in Hell because she locked up a cat until it died of hunger." Allah's Apostle further said, "Allah said [to her], 'You neither fed it nor gave it water when you locked it up, nor did you set it free to eat the insects of the earth.'"

Hadith 557:

Narrated Abu Huraira:

The Prophet said, "There are three types of people whom Allah will neither talk to, nor look at, on the Day of Resurrection:

1. A man who takes a false oath that he has been offered much more for his goods than what he is given,

2. A man who takes a false oath after the 'Asr prayer in order to seize a Muslim's property, and

3. A man who withholds surplus water. Allah will say to him, 'Today I will withhold My Grace from you as you withheld the excess of what you had not created.'"

Book of Oppressions, Hadith 646:

Narrated Abu Huraira:

The Prophet said, "A man felt very thirsty while he was on the way, when he came across a well. He went down the well, quenched his thirst and came out. Meanwhile he saw a dog panting and licking mud because of excessive thirst. He said to himself, 'This

dog is suffering from thirst as I did.' So, he went down the well again and filled his shoe with water and gave to the dog to drink. Allah thanked him for that deed and forgave him." The people asked, "O Allah's Apostle! Is there a reward for us in serving the animals?" He replied, "Yes, there is a reward for serving any living being."

Hadith 652:

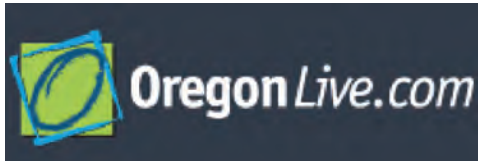
Narrated Abu Huraira:

Allah's Apostle said, "While a man was traveling, he found a thorny branch of a tree on the road and removed it. Allah thanked him for that deed and forgave him."

Book of Making the Heart Tender, Hadith 453:

Narrated Abu Huraira:

The Prophet said, "Wealth does not mean having an abundant amount of property, but [true] wealth is self-contentment."



Murdering innocent and love of country (Islam's perspective)

By Rizwan Khalid

Another attempted terrorist attack today by a misguided Muslim American. This time it was a Somali born, 19 year old, naturalized citizen of the United States. The trend again and again shows us a misguided individual who calls himself a Muslim, filled with hate, trying to kill innocent citizens without any regard of killing children or women.

I, as an Ahmadi Muslim American, am disgusted by this attempt to kill my fellow citizens in Oregon. Killing of an innocent citizen irrespective of what religion they believe in is prohibited in Islam. We, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community (www.alislam.org), believe in the true teachings of Islam which is to not be part of violent jihad, obey by the laws of the country you live in and most importantly loyalty to the country you live in.

It is the duty of all Muslims living in the US to be loyal to the United States of

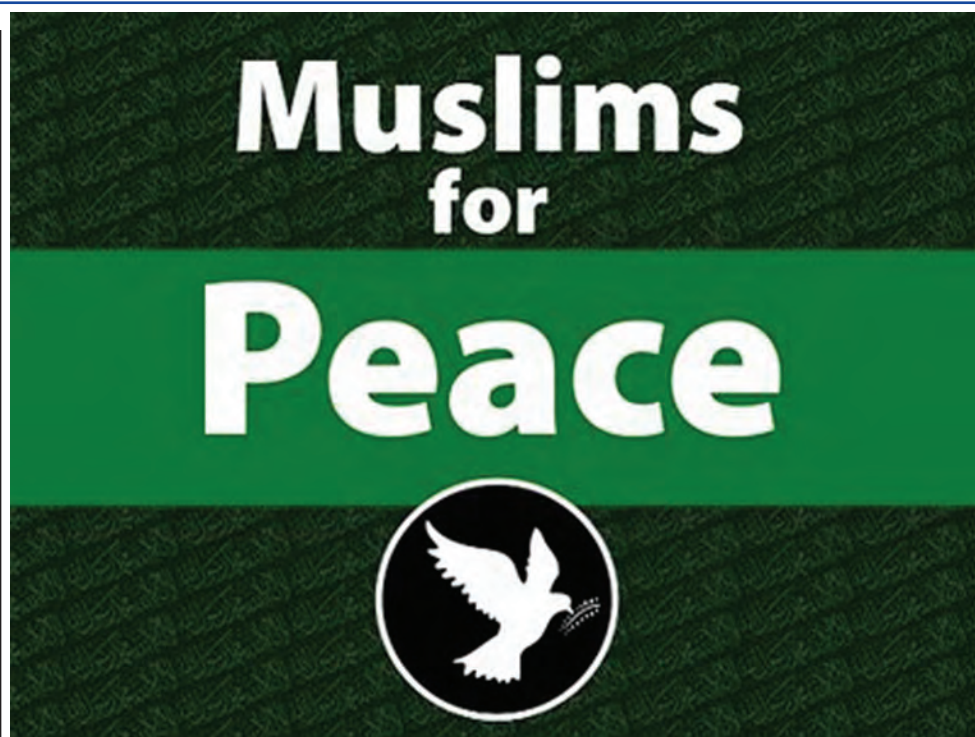
America. Their should not be any bewilderment on choosing Islam and loyalty to

one's country. Misguided Muslim Americans only need to look at the example of

the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) who beautifully said loving one's country is part of the faith.

Mosques in the US need to instill the Islamic values of loyalty to one's country among their members and most importantly the youth. Muslims are clearly told in Quran not to create disorder and it is the duty of every Muslim to follow the laws of the land they live in.

It is time that all Muslims join the efforts of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community to be activists of peace, follow the teachings of real Islam, and either love this great country of ours or leave it.



Ahmadiyya message of love, loyalty and peace in Times Square.

What started in New York in the aftermath of failed Times Square bombing attempt, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community's nationwide Muslims for Peace campaign comes back to New York City for a bang.

"Muslims stand for love, loyalty to America and peace—and an electronic billboard in the heart of Times Square will broadcast that exact message every hour, 18 hours a day, for one month through the holiday season and into the new year," said a community press release.

According to the press release, the advertisement on the CBS Spectacular Electronic Billboard is the latest effort by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, the oldest Muslim organization in the United States, to spread awareness about Islam's true teachings through its nationwide Muslims for Peace campaign.

The press release says that since the campaign was launched in New York after the Times Square terrorism attempt in

May, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA has delivered its message of peace on 100 New York City transit buses, on billboards in cities around the United States, and by hand distributing more than 500,000 peace brochures in towns and cities across the nation.

"In light of recent terrorism attempts in Oregon and Maryland, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has redoubled its effort to guide both Muslims and non-Muslims alike to the true, loving and peaceful teachings of Islam," The press release read. "The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community advocates zero tolerance for violence and terrorism and invites all Muslims to join in its peace effort."

"As Muslims who believe in the Messiah, we recognize that it takes more than just denouncing terrorism to eradicate this menace to society," said Nasim Rehmatullah, vice president of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA. "That's why, in addition to spreading a message of peace for the last 120 years, our community guides Muslim youth to understand that there can never be any contradiction between being observant Muslims and loyal, law-abiding citizens."

News, Views and Reviews

OshKosh, Wisconsin, mosque opens with little fanfare

By Jason Zimmerman WBAY-TV

After an extensive debate, the first mosque in the city of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, opened quietly.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community recently bought the former Seefeld Funeral Home in the 300-block of Eagle Street, and they've been holding prayer services for almost three weeks.

"As a community it is a major milestone that we have our own place that we can go and worship and where we can invite others to come and see us worship and have talks about matters of faith," Umair Ahmed said.

Given the name Masjid Qamar, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community continues to renovate the property.

"We did our part, and we continue to do our part. To any decisions that we are making, that impacts them, we discuss with them and ask for their input," Khurram Ahmad, president of the Muslim community said.

open house next spring. In the meantime, they plan to continue to reach out to the community with the hope of gaining acceptance.

"We want to make sure people know that we're here and they feel we are a good addition to the neighborhood. Even before we got the mosque, we went around the neighborhood to distribute our Muslims for pPeace fliers, and we got a very positive reaction to that," Ahmed said.



Mullah, the silent killer

Paddy Shenkman
www.chowk.com

Unlike the Taliban, Mullahs do not personally claim for anyone's life but instead infiltrate the hatred which eventually leads to those killings. Hence the Taliban are just a byproduct of Mullah's hateful package.

It was a cold December Friday afternoon of 1999. The echoes of the Mullah's shouting on the loud speakers could be heard from a 360 degrees. Voices coming from various mosques, A mullah talking about America while another talking about

the corrupt leaders of the country were the kind of voices could be heard from everywhere. In the midst of it all, I woke up and went to the toilet to take a shower to get ready for a lazy Friday afternoon when I heard another Mullah shouting from a nearby mosque, "They think that Jesus is the son of God". I quickly started paying more attention to what he was saying. "They are doing a shirk (associating people with God in Islam) and deserve a severe punishment".

At that time, I was only 13 and failed to realize that our country was going into a very dangerous direction.

Cut to 28th of May 2010, more than a 100 people are brutally murdered by a handful of teenagers. The victims came from a broad spectrum of the Pakistani society; some were businessmen while the other retired judges.

However, the media covered the massacre quite thoroughly with up to date news reporting. And shortly later they started their analysis of the the whole event. It didn't take them that long to blame the government security agencies for their ill security measures. The places that were attacked by the terrorists were Ahmedi mosques but the media wasn't prepared to take their reputation on risk. And instead chose a safer path by calling the Ahmedi mosques "the Ahmadi place of worship."

In no time it seemed that the anchor-men on the news channels were least concerned about the casualties and were more worried about the selection of the words they could use for Ahmedis (Ahmedis are just about considered the Pakistani version of jews). These were the signs that led me to thinking that there is a silent person watching every move of my society and that person isn't America neither he is India. He is much more deep rooted

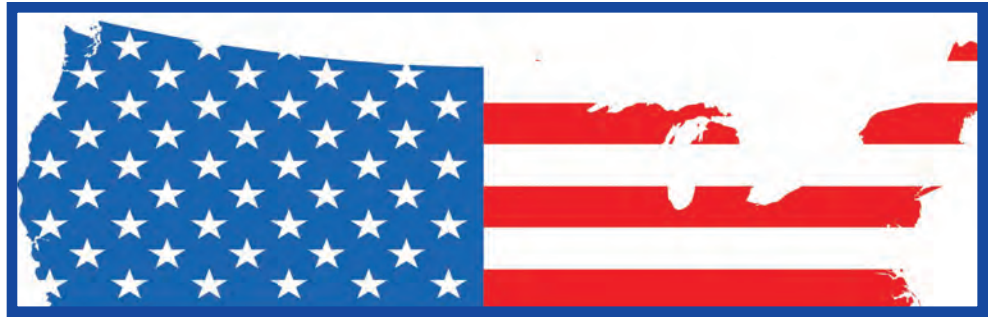
News, Views and Reviews

Mullah, the silent killer

within the society than those two external forces.

While the Americans are busy with their drone attacks and the Pakistani army is fighting the militants out in tribal areas there is a silent killer polluting the society within. Unlike their counterparts (the Taliban), Mullahs do not personally claim for anyone's life but instead infiltrate the hatred which eventually leads to those killings. Hence the Taliban are just a byproduct of Mullah's hateful package towards anyone who doesn't agree with the Mullah ideology. Let's take an example of what happened to Ahmedis, Ahmedis were called *Wajib-ul-Qatal* (right to be killed) on national television by the very Mullah school of thought not very long ago. However, it isn't just Ahmedis who are in trouble, the mullah ideology has taken a war on The Barelvis, The Shiites, Christians, Hindus, Politicians, liberals and the list may just go on and on. Some of the very fine indications of the hateful war are quite widespread on the internet itself. For example, there is a YouTube channel entirely dedicated to target Shiites by the name "real face of Shiaism" while the other is called "exposingbatil" (Meaning exposing liars) in a war against the Barelvis. It is a much more dangerous war because it's not a war on ethnical or cultural identity but a war based on minor religious indifferences.

And who do they target? of course the youth; the poor, unemployed, confused and victimized by the widespread-corruption youth. And, since the Mullah is the silent killer it is very unlikely that he will be caught until a thorough socio-economic crackdown is done to bring "the haters" to justice. And until it is not done parallel to the military actions taken to curb the Taliban, the War on Terror will have no lasting effect.



Oldest American Muslim organization broadcasts message of love, loyalty and peace in Times Square

Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA brings its nationwide Muslims for Peace campaign back to New York City.

Muslims stand for love, loyalty to America and peace—and an electronic billboard in the heart of Times Square will broadcast that exact message every hour, 18 hours a day, for one month through the holiday season and into the new year. The advertisement on the CBS Spectacular Electronic Billboard is the latest effort by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, the oldest Muslim organization in the United States, to spread awareness about Islam's true teachings through its nationwide Muslims for Peace campaign.

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See the Times Square electronic billboard message at <http://www.MuslimsforPeace.org/timesquare>

For more information, contact spokesperson Waseem Sayed at 909-636-4397 or visit <http://www.MuslimsforPeace.org>.



A view of the electronic billboard - part of the Muslims for Peace campaign - in Times Square. Courtesy Nushrat Qadir, Muslims for Peace Campaign.

A Refutation of The Grand Design

By Zia H. Shah, MD

The title of Stephen Hawking's recent book that he has co-authored with Leonard Mlodinow is '*The Grand Design*.' The book offers an alternative to the typical Judeo-Christian belief in God that most Westerners have been exposed to, but fails to offer any new evidence to prove an atheistic premise. The book serves as a nice compilation of commonly known scientific information. However, the book fails to weaken the Islamic concept of God as expressed in the Holy Qur'an.

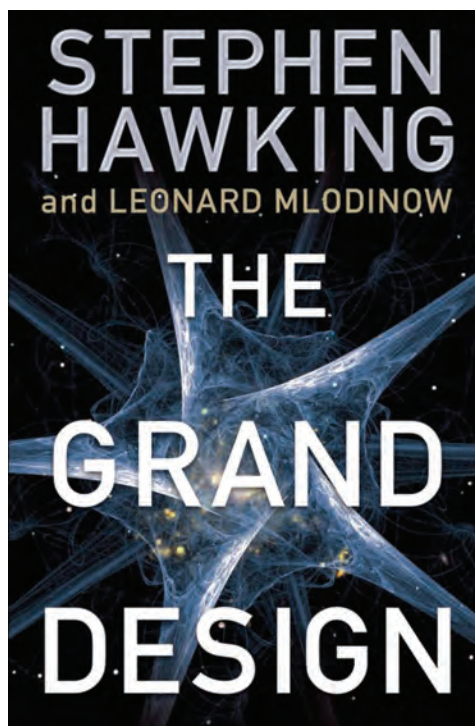
In Islam, God is viewed as a Supreme, Transcendent being, beyond matter space and time. By definition, He is beyond the study of science and human observations cannot directly reach Him.¹ We can appreciate the Transcendent Creator only in the beauty and organization of His creation and this is highlighted several times in the Holy Qur'an and confirmed by many secular writers.^{2 3} Hawking conceded this belief in God when he previously said, "The odds against a universe like ours emerging out of something like the Big Bang are enormous. I think there are clearly religious implications."⁴

To elaborate, the likelihood of blind chance in cosmology can easily accrue to one in a billion or one in a trillion and even beyond. Those with a preconceived commitment to atheism face a futile dilemma – one which authors like Hawking seek to dismiss.

Self sufficiency of Nature

Hawking's book proposes that a natural and orderly explanation of phenomena within the realm of science rules out the possibility of God as the Creator. However, the flaw in this argument is the presumption that God resorts to supernatural, miraculous or chaotic means, and does not work within the Natural Laws He has authored.

In the past, the idea that nature was a complete, functional, self-sufficient system was seldom thought to be an argument against the existence of God. Quite the contrary, it was regarded as proof of the wisdom, skill and care



of that Great Architect. The heavens in all their regularity reflected the grandeur of the Lord. Science was merely an investigative process by which God's natural laws could be understood and explained. Immanuel Kant said, "God has put a secret art into the forces of Nature so as to enable it to fashion itself out of chaos into a perfect world system."⁵

Sir Isaac Newton agreed, saying, "This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an Intelligent and Powerful Being."⁶

Asking the wrong questions generally provide irrelevant answers – a strategy often used by politicians and journalists...and in this case, atheist writers. They exclude God from the conversation and win their premise by creating a paradigm of propaganda wherein the presence of God cannot be demonstrated. For example Hawking writes, "Many people through the ages have attributed to God the beauty and complexity of nature that in their time seemed to have no scientific explanation. But just as Darwin and Wallace explained how the apparently miraculous design of living

forms could appear without intervention by the Supreme Being, the multiverse concept can explain the fine-tuning of physical law without the need for a benevolent creator who made the universe for our benefit."⁷

However, Hawking fails to perceive that we can continue to attribute to God the beauty and complexity of nature, despite the scientific explanation, in a more accurate paradigm with better metaphysics. Unlike the Christians of the Middle Ages, Muslims of the twenty first century do not believe in the *God of the gaps*. We do not believe in a Creator to explain the gaps in our understanding of some phenomena. We believe in Him because of the elegance and complexity of the laws of nature. We believe in Him because He is the Supreme Law Giver who is Transcendent, beyond time, space and matter, Who created the universe in a manner that allows us free will, and revealed Himself to thousands of independent prophets and saints, and He listens to our prayers and answers accordingly.⁸

Enlightened believers do not propose a God of the gaps for deficiencies in scientific explanations, rather they appreciate that God is Subtle and Transcendent and uses natural mechanisms only. His intricate and inexhaustible knowledge of the laws of nature precludes the need to resort to the supernatural to create and manage. The Holy Qur'an mentions an attribute of God *Al-Baatin*, meaning *the Hidden*, one meaning of which is that science cannot catch Him directly at work on His creation. The Holy Qur'an teaches, "Allah is the First and the Last, and the Manifest and the Hidden, and He has full knowledge of all things." (Al Qur'an 57:4)

Multiverse

The other main thesis of the book seems to be a reliance on the multiverse theory and M theory to rescue the sinking ship of atheism. These are invoked in concluding paragraphs of several chapters. The multiverse theory however belongs to science fiction rather than science. Why have some scientists jumped on the band wagon of multiverse theory? Perhaps, it is to avoid the overwhelming evidence for purpose and design found in

modern science, in the fine tuning of several physical constants to make the universe biophyllic. Baron John Rees, President of the Royal Society of UK writes in his book, *Just Six Numbers: the Deep Forces That Shape the Universe* describes:

“I have highlighted these six because each plays a crucial and distinctive role in our universe, and together they determine how the universe evolves and what its internal potentialities are; ...

These six numbers constitute a ‘recipe’ for a universe. Moreover, the outcome is sensitive to their values: if anyone of them were to be ‘untuned,’ there would be no stars and no life. Is this tuning just a brute fact, a coincidence? Or is it the providence of a benign Creator?”⁹

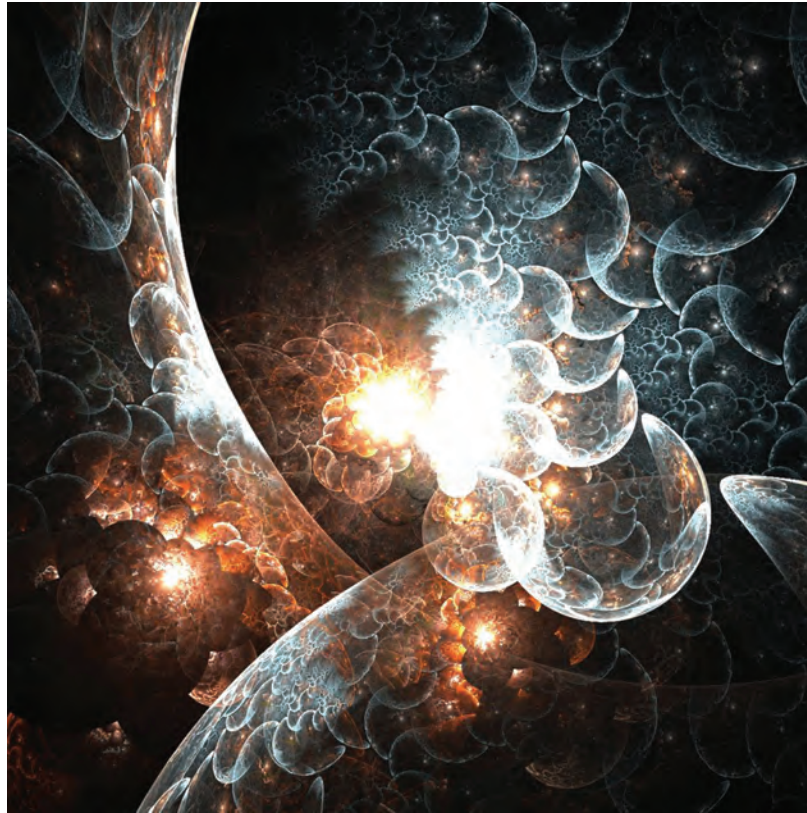
To drive home the full force of the fine tuning of these six numbers from physics, Martin Rees further quotes a very useful metaphor:

“There are various ways of reacting to the apparent fine tuning of our six numbers. One hard-headed response is that we couldn’t exist if these numbers weren’t adjusted in the appropriate ‘special’ way: we manifestly are here, so there’s nothing to be surprised about. Many scientists take this line, but it certainly leaves me unsatisfied. I’m impressed by a metaphor given by the Canadian philosopher John Leslie. Suppose you are facing a firing squad. Fifty marksmen take aim, but they all miss. If they hadn’t all missed, you wouldn’t have survived to ponder the matter. But you wouldn’t just leave it at that - you’d still be baffled, and would seek some further reason for your good fortune.”^{10 11}

Hawking tells us in his book:

“Cardinal Christoph Schonborn, arch-

bishop of Vienna, wrote, ‘Now, at the beginning of the 21st century, faced with scientific claims like neo-Darwinism and the multiverse [many universes] hypothesis in cosmology invented to avoid the overwhelming evidence for purpose and design found in modern science,.’”¹²



He chooses to put multiverse genuinely in the province of science while the multiverse is by definition outside of our universe and there is no hope of us ever studying or observing it, except in make belief stories.

I agree with the Cardinal completely in his assessment of the multiverse. I believe, multiverse is the main ploy of the atheists to wriggle out of the evidence of the finely tuned universe. Antony Flew explains, “This fine tuning has been explained in two ways. Some scientists have said the fine tuning is evidence for divine design; many others have speculated that our universe is one of multiple others—a ‘multiverse’—with the difference that ours happened to have the right conditions for life. Virtually no major scientist today claims that the fine tuning was purely a result of chance factors at work in a single universe.”¹³ The validity and eloquence of the argument of fine

tuning of our universe is self evident. What would the atheists do to wriggle out of this? They believe multiverse is the magical wand, hymn, mantra or panacea, they need to invoke in every moment of difficulty or distress.

A true scientific explanation, says

Paul Davies, is like a single well-aimed bullet. The idea of a multiverse replaces the rationally ordered real world with an infinitely complex charade and makes the whole idea of ‘explanation’ meaningless.¹⁴ Richard Swinburne is just as strong in his disdain for the multiverse explanation: “It is crazy to postulate a trillion (causally unconnected) universes to explain the features of one universe, when postulating one entity (God) will do the job.”¹⁵

I quoted Martin Rees above to make my points but as he wanders away and drifts into the atheist world in the last chapter of his book, I have to be critical of his elusive defense of multiverse. Now watch how he starts manufacturing smoke screens in the concluding chapter of the book *Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape the Universe*. The chapter is titled, *Coincidence, providence—or multiverse*, he

writes trying to be an apologetic for ‘multiverse’ concept:

“Some people may be inclined to dismiss such concepts (multiverse) as ‘meta-physics’ (a damning put-down from a physicist’s viewpoint). But I think the multiverse genuinely lies within the province of science, even though it is plainly still no more than a tentative hypothesis. This is because we can already map out what questions must be addressed in order to put it on a more credible footing; more importantly (since any good scientific theory must be vulnerable to being refuted), we can envisage some developments that might rule out the concept.”¹⁶

He chooses to put multiverse genu-

inely in the province of science while the multiverse is by definition outside of our universe and there is no hope of us ever studying or observing it, except in make belief stories. He admits this as he later confesses, “These universes would never be directly observable; we couldn’t even meaningfully say whether they existed ‘before’, ‘after’ or ‘alongside’ our own.”¹⁷

M Theory

New techniques established that various versions of string theory developed over the preceding decades were essentially all the same. Theorists call this unification of formerly distinct string theories by a new name, *M-theory*, with the meaning of M being deferred until the theory is more fully understood.”¹⁸

M theory has close relationship with the multiverse theory. For example, Hawking teaches us in the final paragraphs of the fifth chapter that the M theory allows for ten raised to the power 500 different universes, each with its own laws. Now any universe outside our own by its very definition cannot be observed, so multiverse theory lies outside the realm of science, but paraphrasing Hawking’s number of possible universes, there may be ten raised to the power 500 variables that make our universe biophysical. What the atheists may consider fortunate coincidences or serendipitous happenings for those who are not obsessed with atheistic paradigm; these are so many reasons to be thankful to our Creator.

Hawking’s inability to explain free will

He writes talking about Robots and his text gives away his inability to explain human free will:

“How can one tell if a being has free will? If one encounters an alien, how can one tell if it is just a robot or it has a mind of its own? The behavior of a robot would be completely determined, unlike that of a being with free will. Thus one could in principle detect a robot as a being whose actions can be predicted. ... This may be impossibly difficult if the being is large and complex. We cannot even solve exactly the equations for three or more particles interacting with each other. Since an alien the size of a human would contain about a thousand trillion trillion par-

ticles even if the alien were a robot, it would be impossible to solve the equations and predict what it would do.”¹⁹

Translated into common English, Hawking is unable to explain free will. This exposes the vulnerability of his thesis. If man is free and not merely a product of what has gone before; in a completely predetermined fashion, his free will implies that there is a creator of this universe. Allah created the universe in a manner that He could provide humanity free will. He made our actions matter, our choices genuine and not predetermined or predestined. In the words of Professor Kenneth R Miller, “The Western God (Islam, Christianity and Judaism) stands back from His creation, not to absent Himself, not to abandon His creatures, but to allow His people true freedom.”²⁰

Inadequacies of some of the religious myths from ancient cultures

Stephen Hawking and with Leonard Mlodinow mention at least one limitation of Biblical description from scientific perspective and several other mythologies including Chinese, African and Mayan.²¹

Atheist writers should evaluate the Holy Qur’an, the only claimed literal word of God that is historically preserved, rather than poke holes in deficient myths and legends.

Epilogue

Hawking at the peak of his career saw theistic implications in the organization and complexity of the universe. However, he now adamantly claims that there is no creator of this universe because science can adequately provide explanations. Unfortunately, his foundational arguments against God are flawed. It’s ironic that such a great scientist could have overlooked the simple fundamentals of Islamic creation theory, such as the works of God must be in harmony with the words of God.

This is where revelation can come to the rescue and support of human reason. It is much harder for a Muslim believer to sway on such fundamental issues as the Holy Qur’an repeated claims that Allah is the Creator of this universe.²³

It takes a life time of study and devotion to train physicists like Hawking and even then the best in the field are barely scratching at the complexity of reality. To attribute such beauty, complexity and organization to mindless accident is presumptuous and short sighted to say the least.

Endnotes

¹ Al Quran 6:104.

² Al Quran 27:45.

³ Al Quran 38:33.

⁴ J Boslough. Stephen Hawking’s universe.

William Morrow, New York, 1985. Page 121.

⁵ Edward Robert Harrison. *Masks of the Universe: Changing Ideas on the Nature of the Cosmos*. Cambridge University Press, 2003. Page 108.

⁶ Roger Ariew and Eric Watkins. *Readings in Modern Philosophy*. Hackett Publishing, 2000. Page 299.

⁷ Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow. *The Grand Design*. Bantam Books, New York, 2010. Page 165.

⁸ Al Quran 27: 63.

⁹ John Rees. *Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape the Universe*. Basic Books, 2000. Page 4.

¹⁰ John Rees. *Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape the Universe*. Basic Books, 2000. Page 4.

¹¹ John Rees. *Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape the Universe*. Basic Books, 2000. Page 165-166.

¹² Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow. *The Grand Design*. Bantam Books, New York, 2010. Page 162-163.

¹³ Antony Flew. *There Is a God: How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind*. Harper One, 2007. Page 115.

¹⁴ Paul Davies, “Universes Galore: Where Will It All End?” <http://cosmos.asu.edu/publications/chapters/Universes%20galore.pdf>

¹⁵ Richard Swinburne, “Design Defended,” *Think* (Spring 2004): page 17.

¹⁶ John Rees. *Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape the Universe*. Basic Books, 2000. Page 166-167.

¹⁷ John Rees. *Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape the Universe*. Basic Books, 2000. Page 168.

¹⁸ “string theory.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2010. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. 08 Dec. 2010 <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/574576/string-theory>>.

¹⁹ Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow. *The Grand Design*. Bantam Books, New York, 2010. Pages 178.

²⁰ Kenneth R Miller. *Finding Darwin’s God*. Cliff Street Books (Harper Collins), paper back edition 2000, p. 253.

²¹ Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow. *The Grand Design*. Bantam Books, New York, 2010. Page 87.

²² Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow. *The Grand Design*. Bantam Books, New York, 2010. Page 123, 149 and 163.

²³ Al Quran 1:2. Al Quran 59:25.

God Made It For You & Me

God's blessings are such wonderful bliss,
With every new morning, we witness this.
Life is such a simple and beautiful wish,
Like a glowing moon, full without blemish.

The sky twinkles with the stars so bright
Nature seems so perfect and very right.
The absolute light of day and peace of night
Makes the earth such a magnificent sight.

Far and across wherever I see
It's God's bounty, a stunning ecstasy.
He made this world so perfectly,
With everything right, as it should be.

The earth is filled with marvelous wonders,
Each piece in its perfect place, not to be asunder.
Then shouldn't we protect all of these
Because God made it for you and me.

But the sky isn't blue anymore,
Seas are turning brown and yellow.
Trees are scarce and so is the fresh air,
The world is becoming completely bare.

This is our environment, so keep it clean,
From the evergreen forests to the raging seas.
It hurts to see all the people on earth ignore,
The situation is grave, more than ever before.

For us to befriend the earth, we must be gentle,
For God has made earth vitally fundamental.
So shouldn't we protect all of God's things?
Because God made it for us, all of His beings.

-- Maria Andleeb Ahmed



By Naeem Ahmad Rathore

Question: Why is the Qur'an written only in Arabic?

Answer: The Holy Qur'an is the last scripture sent down by the Almighty God. It was vouchsafed to the Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad^{SAW}, in the Arabic tongue of his city, Mecca and its region, the Hedjaz. It was revealed in portions over a 23 year period and the Prophet^{SAW} had a select group of scribes who would record the various revelations in the order he commanded. The Prophet^{SA} and hundreds of his companions^{RA} committed the entire Qur'an to memory in the sequential order directed by the angel Gabriel.

The Qur'an makes the claim that its text would be safeguarded and its meanings available for all times (15:10). The former has been achieved by the tradition of *Huffaz*, Memorizers (lit. *Protectors*), numbering in millions, who commit

the entire text to memory and recite it in the five daily prayers. They also recite the entire Qur'an annually during the month of Ramadhaan during the nightly *Taraweeh* prayers.

A preserved text in itself is not enough if the language is rendered obscure and/or is inadequate to convey the eternal verities through the passage of time. Scriptures of nearly all belief systems have become inaccessible in their original form as the languages of their revelations have become obsolete and fallen into disuse. Also, through the centuries, languages evolve in different patterns and dialects giving new meanings to old phrases and creating a new syntax and system of conveying information and ideas. Ancient Hebrew, Aramaic, Classical Greek, *Zind Avista* (Ancient Persian language of the Zoroastrian scriptures), and indeed Sanskrit are now the domain of classical scholars and archaeologists. Arabic, on the other hand had flourished long before the dawn of Islam as a potent medium of poetry, high prose, and for everyday life. There is not much difference between the style and mode of classical and modern Arabic. Also, there is a large collection of lexicological literature that evidences the breadth and depth of the meanings of the Arabic language.

The Qur'an proclaims that it has been sent down in Arabic so that its message and meaning may be plainly expounded for those who

are aware of God (12:3 *et seq.*). This claim contains a prophecy that the language of the Holy Qur'an will always be available and its meaning will always be within reach. It is the fulfillment of this prophecy that Arabic is the language of literature, commerce and conversation of a large and vital portion of the world population. True, there are many dialects and regional differences in the spoken language, but it is a most pertinent fact that whenever Arab strangers meet, they always address each other in the classical language of the Qur'an.

Question: Are there any authentic translations?

Answer: Regarding translations, it is to be remembered that no translation can ever encompass the full range of nuances and facets of the message of the original. Any translation is a product of its environment: of a given time and place, and of the psyche and intellect of the translator. There can, therefore, be no authentic translation and the only reliable text is the Arabic codex which is unanimously agreed upon by all Muslim sects. Non-Muslim orientalists agree and their research has verified that the Qur'an was compiled in the time of the Holy Prophet, Muhammad^{SAW}.

Connivance by Silence

By Atif Munawar Mir

The fact that a silent majority of Muslims have failed to forcefully and unequivocally condemn terrorism in the name of Islam makes them unwilling accomplices. This is the main argument that Arif Humayun presents in his book *"Connivance by Silence."*

This book is a noble attempt to illustrate that the peaceful teachings of Islam have slowly become political tools in the hands of extremists. The author urges Muslims not only to rediscover the true teachings of Islam but also to become a strong voice against radical elements that have hijacked Islam for political gain. In the book, Humayun briefly highlights those historical instances when Islamic beliefs were deformed to fit the perceived political needs of a relevant Muslim population. He briefly discusses the doctrines of Ibn Taymiyyah (1268-1328), Maulana Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, and Sayyid Qutb, a protégé of Banna. Their doctrines were based less on Islamic teachings and more on what they perceived to be the political needs of the Muslims, during their respective times. These doctrines, the author successfully argues, were designed to politically motivate Muslims but instead produced disastrous historical consequences.

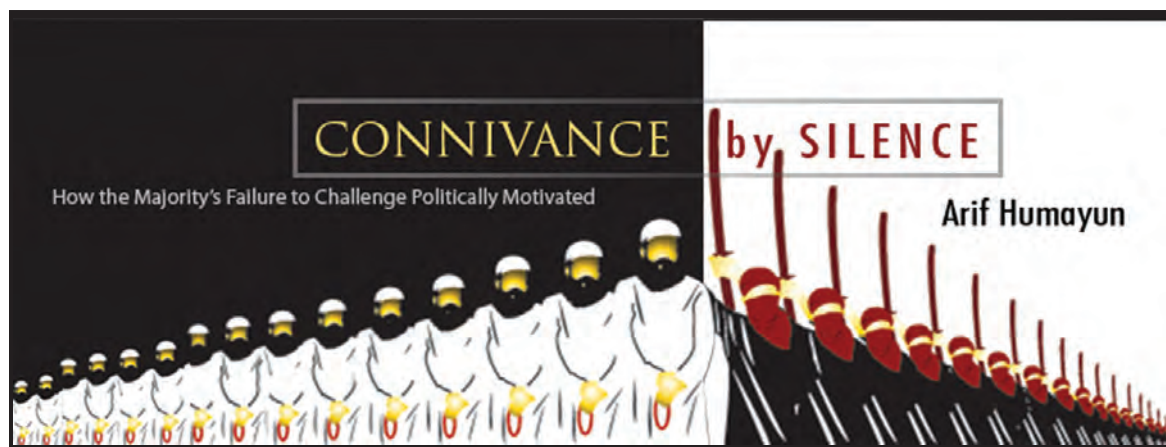
In the book, the author briefly discusses and occasionally analyzes some important events of Islamic history to make his point. However, since Pakistan is identified as the breeding ground of terrorism, he primarily focuses on the evolution of extremism in Pakistan to illustrate his argument.

The author argues that the declining political and economic glory of Muslims accelerated when they failed to appreciate the value of secular education that emerged in the west in the 17th and 18th centuries and as a result did not benefit from the fruits of industrial development. Muslims also felt themselves at the losing end, on the religious front when Christian and Hindu missionaries actively sought converts from the dejected Muslim population. The author forcefully points out that the attempt to revive Islam experienced a severe setback when many Muslim scholars branded Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} a heretic and accused him of working for the British government,

to revive the caliphate system and aimed to establish a global Islamic state.

The Munir Commission report, drafted in Pakistan in response to *Majlis Ahrar's* attack on Ahmadis in 1953, took the intellectual wind out of the sails of these radical organizations when after a diligent investigation, it concluded that the *ulema* were clueless about their own proposed ideals, having failed to provide any relevant precedence (in Islamic history). The commission's report is relevant even today since this extremist ideology continues to be propagated in the Muslim world, particularly in Pakistan.

Unfortunately, the impact of this twisted theology is no longer limited to the Indian



even though he single handedly refuted the Christian and Hindu attacks against Islam.

The situation of Muslims became even bleaker when the Ottoman Caliphate, the symbol of Muslim unity, was abolished in 1924. The abolition only strengthened the appeal of extremist and radical ideologies. As a result, radical movements sprang up in the Muslim world. In Egypt, Hassan al-Banna formed the Muslim Brotherhood. A decade or so later, Maulana Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi of India founded the Jamaat-e-Islami party in 1941. Sayyid Qutb, a protégé of Banna and a contemporary of Maududi, launched a radical movement in Egypt. All these radical movements rejected European political ideals and advocated *Jihad* as the need of the hour and as an integral part of Islamic faith. Among other things, these radical organizations tried to re-

subcontinent or the Middle East. Extremist ideology, the author argues, has begun to take root in the minds of Western Muslims as well. The author implores Muslims to condemn terrorism, for their silence is mistaken for support of terrorism.

The author does recognize the double standards of American and Western foreign policies when dealing with Muslim countries. However, he argues that these double standards reflect political considerations and should be dealt with politically without dragging religion into it.

The book is a good discussion of those forces that have caused and shaped the extremist elements in the Islamic world, and lays the foundation for deeper research. The book also provides extensive appendices, which will prove useful to the reader for further research.



America's fight is against radicals, not Muslims

...It bears reminding each other that this nation was established in large measure by those seeking to escape the same kind of religious persecution. No American should applaud or otherwise abide behavior that denigrates the proud tradition by which virtually every religion in the world is not only permitted here, but also freely practiced.

This article was submitted by Archbishop Joseph Fiorenza, archbishop emeritus of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston; Rabbi Samuel E. Karff, rabbi emeritus, Congregation Beth Israel; Rev. Dr. William A. Lawson, pastor emeritus, Wheeler Ave Baptist Church; Dr. Basheer Khumawala, University of Houston professor and Muslim leader; and Rev. Stephen D. Quill, executive director, Truthouston.

As Americans, as Texans and as proud Houstonians, we have been saddened and alarmed by the growing hostility — in word, and in deed - being directed against Muslims in the United States.

In case you are unaware, several media reports from the past year underscore a deeply troubling trend. For example:

"A group of children leaving a Connecticut mosque had to brace themselves as they walked past a group of about a dozen protesters yelling 'Islam is a lie' and 'Jesus hates Muslims.' One man shoved his sign at them and yelled, 'Murderers!'"

"A mosque was bombed in Florida, several mosques have been vandalized across the country and a Quran was burned at the Islamic Center of Greater Lansing (Michigan) with apparent fecal matter smeared on pages that were ripped out of it."

"A 24-year-old Seattle man [was] ac-

cused of threatening to cut a woman and her infant because she is Muslim."

And perhaps most troubling of all was the 21 year-old film student in New York City who repeatedly stabbed his cab driver this past summer after learning he was a Muslim.

In the face of these and other heinous acts, it bears reminding each other that this nation was established in large measure by those seeking to escape the same kind of religious persecution. No American should applaud or otherwise abide behavior that denigrates the proud tradition by which virtually every religion in the world is not only permitted here, but also freely practiced.

The fact is, every day, thousands in Houston and millions elsewhere around America live in the silent fear that some erratic, delusional or troubled member of their community will orchestrate a terrible event that reflects horribly on them and, by extension, their religious or ethnic heritage. These innocent, law-abiding citizens worry that they, in turn, will become the unwilling targets of anger and reprisals.

Exacerbating the problem, many fringe special interest groups make money and generate easy headlines capitalizing on the fear of people toward immigrants, people of different faith backgrounds, sexual orientation and ethnicity.

Houston has been fortunate to have had very few public events of a prejudicial nature that have garnered national news, and yet we are no strangers to the discrimination and occasional hate crimes that reverberate through our synagogues,

mosques, churches and temples.

The question now is: In the midst of a war against radicals who pervert the intent of Islam, are we going to assume that all faith communities are going to preach tolerance and respect toward those who are of different faith and culture? If we do, we run the very real risk of waking up one day to discover that the voices of fear, anger and prejudice have won because too many of us who believe that diversity and multiple faith communities are a blessing have been silent.

During another time of national challenge, President Franklin D. Roosevelt asserted that, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Fear can immobilize not only individuals, but also stymie a community's ability to think and act reasonably.

The most painful example of this, of course, transpired in Germany before and during World War II, when many good, hard-working, religious people were silent as they watched their neighbors marched out of their homes and into trains - never to return.

But as history proves, America is not immune from such irrationality. During World War II, under orders from President Roosevelt, Americans silently watched as 120,000 of their neighbors of Japanese descent were rounded up and taken to internment camps - their only crime being their heritage.

Today, once again, America is at war overseas against shadowy, evil forces trying to harm our country. This

time, thankfully, national leaders from both of the major parties have urged us to continue practicing the tolerance that is one of the key pillars of our open society.

And yet, as reports of attempted attacks against America continue to unfold, the fear and the anger against those accused of such evil intentions continues to build. To wit, during one recent outburst, a popular local radio talk show host expressed his hope that someone would bomb the controversial mosque in lower Manhattan if it is ever built. He later apologized, but the incident underscores our shared concern.

Now, more than ever, Houston's religious leaders are needed, and many are ready, to stand together and be a voice of understanding, trust and hope.

Now, more than ever, we must continue leading our respective communities and engage our neighbors of other faith traditions so Houston remains a proud beacon of diversity.

While we must remain vigilant and alert to the enemy from beyond, so too must we also be mindful and aggressive in opposing the enemy from within. During this season of hope and goodwill, let us rededicate ourselves to our founding principles of freedom with tolerance so that we, too, might form a "more perfect Union."

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From the Archives: **Muslim Sunrise, 1940**



An Address Presented To Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad

The Supreme Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement

Qadian, Punjab, India

On the occasion of

Khilafat Silver Jubilee Celebration

December 19, 1939

Hazrat Ameerul Mumineen

Khalifatul Massih II

Qadian, Punjab, India

Beloved and Respected Master:

Assalamo Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatahu.



On the blessed occasion of the Khilafat Jubilee Celebration, we, the American Ahmadees living in the various

parts of the United States of America and representing different races and nationalities, beg to offer our most sincere and humble congratulations to your Hazrat.

May we respectfully assure you, Beloved Master, that though physically we are far, far away, we are with you in spirit.

On this auspicious occasion we have the honor to express our unshaken fealty and loyalty to your

holy person. We consider it our sacred duty, and we make a solemn pledge to accord you our implicit obedience because it is our firm conviction that you are the Promised Khalifa of the Promised Messiah^{as}, chosen by God to guide the spiritual destiny of the World. Hence to obey you is to obey God!

Words fail to express our boundless gratitude to Allah for the incalculable blessing He has conferred

upon us by appointing you as the Successor to the Promised Messiah. At this time, it will not be possible for us to pay tribute to you and your blessed work, but we cannot resist the temptation of making a few brief remarks in this regard.

Five and twenty years ago, when you were called upon to occupy your exalted office, you started to pilot the ship of Islam in the midst of tremendous opposition and against overwhelming odds. The treasury of the movement was almost empty and there were hardly any regular Ahmadiyya Missions outside India. During the period of your blessed regime, you have dotted the world with Ahmadiyya centers. The movement has become far flung and the greatest spiritual force in the world. It can well be said, "The sun does not set in the world of Ahmadiyyat". In you has literally been fulfilled the prophecy of the Promised Messiah. "I shall cause thy name to the uttermost corners of the globe." Many are the prophecies of the Promised Messiah which have been fulfilled in and through you. Victory after Victory has crowned your efforts. Allah has indeed performed miracles, shown His great signs, and revealed His mighty powers through you.

The history of the Ahmadiyya movement during the past twenty-five years appears as a bright and colorful dream. Your work will remain as a glorious and undying monument of Islam as long as the world will last. Greatest is the task which Allah has entrusted to you. You are fulfilling the supreme purpose of the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} and that of the Promised Messiah^{as}. You have laid the solid foundation of enduring world peace and of the salvation of mankind. Generations yet unborn will pay

O Commander of the faithful, we, the American Ahmadees are under a heavy debt of obligation to you. By standing the pioneer missionaries with the torch of Islam and thus establishing the Ahmadiyya Mission in America, you have lifted us out of the quagmire of irreligion, led us out of darkness into light, and have shown us the way to God, We were spiritually slaves and you have emancipated us with the Truth.

tribute to you and your noble work and will offer prayers for the exaltation of your spiritual status.

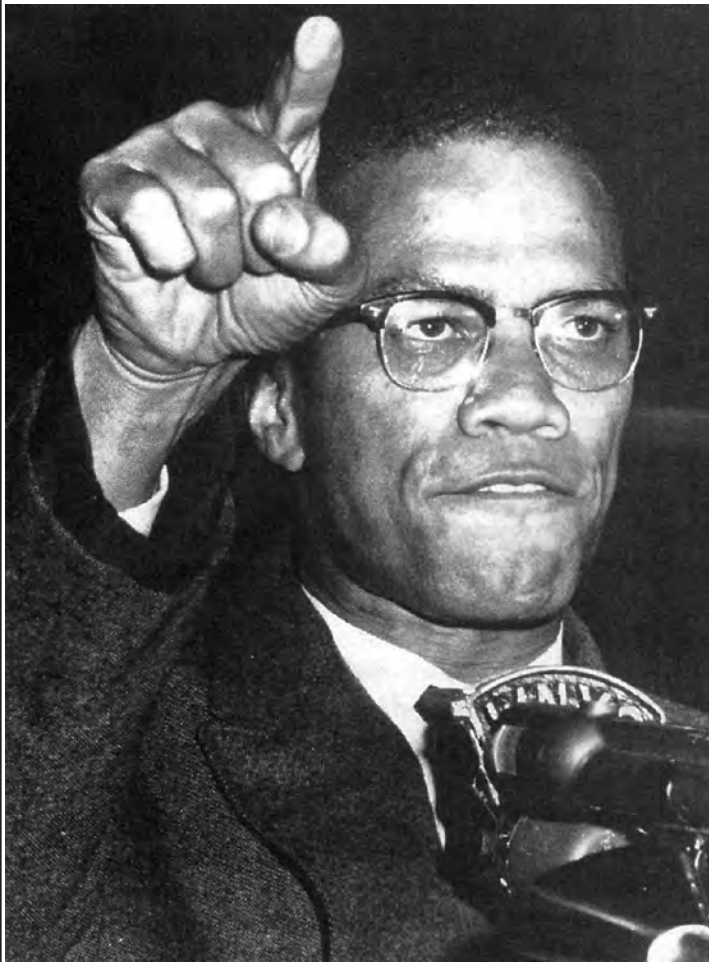
O Commander of the faithful, we, the American Ahmadees are under a heavy debt of obligation to you. By standing the pioneer missionaries with the torch of Islam and thus establishing the Ahmadiyya Mission in America, you have lifted us out of the quagmire of irreligion, led us out of darkness into light, and have shown us the way to God, We were spiritually slaves and you have emancipated us with the Truth.

We have not the power to express our thankfulness to you for this inestimable favour which you have done unto us and unto the future generations of America. We, therefore, lift our hands in prayers to God that He may, out of His infinite mercy and grace, grant you the best rewards, raise you eternally higher and higher in His nearness, and bless all your efforts with magnificent success.

At this point, we humbly solicit your Hazrat to pray in the great drama that is being and will be played by the Ahmadiyya Movement, under your holy leadership, in setting up the Kingdom of God upon earth, may Allah help us, the poor, the weak and the sinful Ahmadees of America to play our parts valiantly as your most obedient servants; also that Allah may grant true and abiding success to the American Mission. May the Sun of Islam rise in this new world in its full glory and splendour! Amen.

Permit us, Beloved Master, to express once more, our profound devotion, love and fealty to your holy self. Our last claim is "All praise belongs to Allah."

We remain, Your most humble and obedient Servants, The Ahmadees of the United States of America.

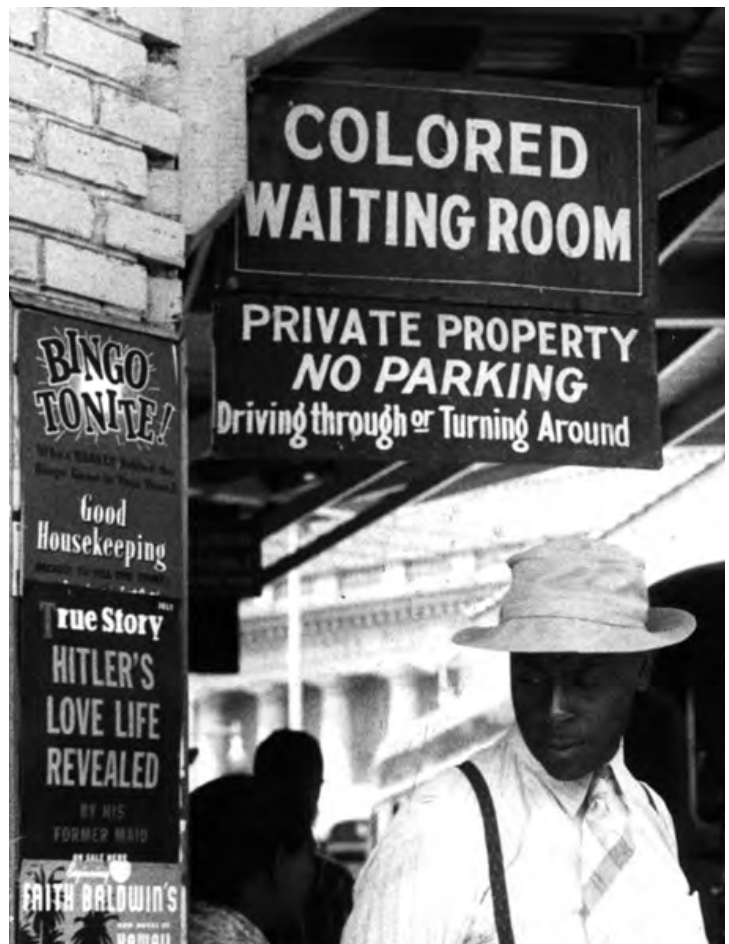


February in America Celebrate

Black history month



Howard Rattle at Hampton
1914?



BLAME

We love to blame others for the bad things that happen to us. It makes us feel better when we can point the finger at someone else. It also gives us a false sense of superiority since others are to blame. At the same time the focus to rehabilitate and refine shifts to others. It's a wonderful *get out of jail card*.



Unfortunately, most of our disasters are caused by our own hands. The Holy Qur'an has mentioned this in verse 30:42. It includes the problems that have become so large that no one seems to be able to find a solution.

We blame the economic disaster on the government, the banking system, insurance companies, stock markets, the rich people and sometimes even God. After all... they make for easy targets. When I started thinking about this, I decided to narrow down the problem so I could get a handle on what I could analyze at a reasonable level. Medical costs in the USA are a major part of our economy and due to its rate of increase over the last few decades have affected our economy adversely. The President has even singled it out as the major cause of our economic recession.

In the blame game, we attack the hospitals, physicians, drug companies and insurance providers of health coverage. We have accomplished successfully to shift the burden of solution and responsibility to everyone but ourselves. The hospitals charge too much for aspirin, physicians perform unnecessary surgeries, drug companies are all working cohesively to sell us name brand drugs that don't cost them too much and the insurance companies collect premiums and find every which way not to pay our medical bills. There is some truth to all of this. But watch how none of the blame goes to us.

What about what we have done? Why do we require so much medical care? Let's simplify the discussion by leaving the obesity problem aside. Nature requires us to eat everyday and our food choices may be limited. So we'll leave that discussion for another day.

What about the consumption of items that nature *does not* require such as cigarette smoking, drinking alcohol and abuse of drugs? We have put so much burden on the health care system by these three habits that if they were not there, our health costs would come down by 80%. (alright... I just made up the 80%, but I know it has to be a high percentage.) Let us not divert our discussion by arguing whether it is 70, 80 or 90%. We

could Google it only to find it depends upon who calculated the percentage and what interest they had in the outcome.

Members of our society increase the medical costs by drinking alcohol. It is not just the harmful effects on one's own body and the resultant diseases of kidneys, heart and whatever else it causes. It is the injured that are treated after a drunk driver causes an accident. It is the battered women who need medical attention because the husband got drunk and one thing led to another. The possibility of the resultant health care needs just due to drinking alcohol is tremendous which affect our economy.

The same holds true for smoking and substance abuse. All kinds of cancers are caused by smoking in addition to the blocked arteries, high blood pressure, and heart problems. How many billions of dollars are spent as part of health costs as a result of treatments required by smoking and substance abuse? I could look up the estimates in billions of dollars but it doesn't matter. We truly can't relate to how big one billion dollars is, but it is certainly bad for our economy.

Instead of blaming others, if we take the responsibility for our own behavior, the medical costs would come down and the economy and the deficit would absolutely get better. We are the public. We are the society. We are responsible for the high medical costs. We are responsible for the shape the economy is in. It is our unnecessary social behavior that has resulted in economic problems whether it is abuse of drugs or spending beyond our means.

The government cannot control our behavior through the laws. It can minimize the effects of our ill behavior but cannot eliminate it. There were prohibition laws that failed to accomplish the intended results. There are laws against the theft of property but jails are full of thieves.

We can only change our behavior when we want to, care to and are determined to do so. When Holy Prophet Muhammad^{saw} declared to his people to refrain from alcohol, they did it. They loved him and they loved God and showed by their determina-

tion to change their social behavior for the good. Their medical costs went down overnight.

It is the parents, the teachers and the clergy who have to work *cohesively* to change the social behavior instead of blaming each other. Parents have to show by example to refrain from these ill habits. The teachers must reinforce the example of parents. The clergy must be bold and valiant in their sermons for better spiritual and moral behavior and not worry about intimidating their congregation for fear of jeopardizing their church mortgage payments.

Blaming others has not worked. When a medicine does not work, the doctor prescribes a different one. So let's do ourselves a big favor and get out of the blame game. We may be pleasantly surprised at the results.

Who knows, there may be doctors looking for patients who can't be found? That would bring the fees way down. They may even start house-visiting again. It happened in the time of the Holy Prophet^{saw}. A king sent a physician to Medina to serve the Holy Prophet^{saw} and his community. He came back after a few months because there was not much for him to do. He explained the reasons for it too. People did physical work (no need for gyms) and they ate when they were real hungry and stopped eating while they still had a little hunger left (the best diet plan).

The bottom line is that our problems are as big or as small as we make them. We have a choice to acknowledge what we can do as individuals, even though we oftentimes overlook this option. If we all decided to do something as small as picking up one piece of garbage in public and putting it in the waste bin, imagine what impact that would have multiplied by the over 6 billion people on the planet. Playing out our individual responsibilities will have faster and more effective results if we just gave it the chance... yet the blame game goes on...

And the blame game would go on.

◆ Falahud Din Shams

The Muslim Sunrise

"En los últimos días, el sol tendrá lugar desde el oeste." (Santo Profeta Muhammad)



Edición Especial Española 2010 Comunidad Musulmana Ahmadiya

90 Years

In its 90 years of history, a special edition in a foreign language, Spanish, was published. Copies of this special magazine are available from the Publications Department, Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, 15000 Good Hope Road, Siverspring, MD 20905. You can also go to Muslimsunrise.com to view a copy.

The next issue of the Muslim Sunrise will recognize 90 years of publishing history in the United States since it was founded by Mufti Muhammad Sadiq, July, 1921.

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and
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Muslims for **Loyalty**



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United States of America

Muslims who believe in the Messiah,
Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian

Should Muslims living in America be loyal to America?



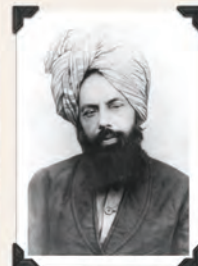
**“O ye who believe! Obey God,
and obey His Messenger and
those who are in authority
among you.”**

— *The Holy Quran (4:60)*

**“LOVE OF ONE’S COUNTRY OF
RESIDENCE IS PART OF FAITH.”**

— *Holy Prophet Muhammad*

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is the leading Islamic organization to promote loyalty to one’s country of residence, as required by Islam. More than a century ago, Ahmad taught his followers to become both righteous souls and loyal citizens, wherever they live.



Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian
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